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Enrique Chagoya, *Les Aventures des Cannibales Modernistes* (detail), 1999, lithograph and woodcut.  
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Volume 9 | Issue 89 | February 2010

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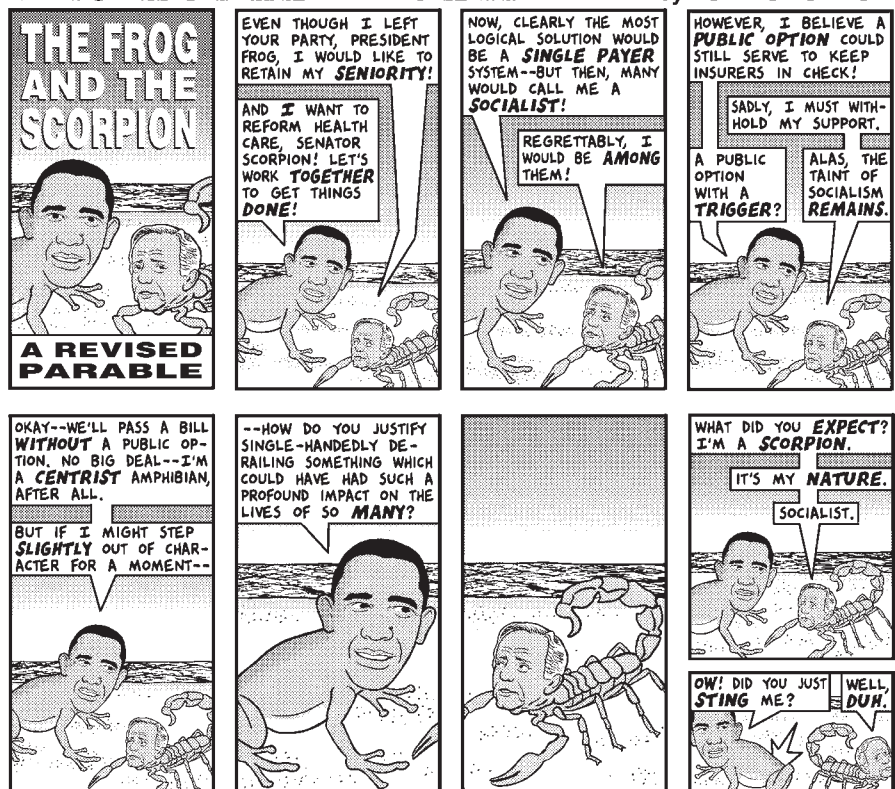
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## THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



# Living in the Right Time

Last month, the land of TV network late-night erupted into all-out war that ended with Jay Leno back at the Tonight Show and Conan O'Brien in the ranks of the unemployed (albeit with a lovely severance package).

At the center of the conflict is time. The failure of NBC's *Jay Leno Show* may have something to do with its quality, but it certainly has a lot to do with the fact that the show doesn't "belong" at 9 p.m. (Central Time). When NBC tried to find a Solomonic solution by putting Jay back on at 10:35 p.m. and bumping Conan O'Brien's fledgling *Tonight Show* to 11:05 p.m., all hell broke loose. In his public statement refusing the move, Conan

**In Eastern Time, 10 p.m. summer sunsets are the norm—as are 4 p.m. winter sunsets.**

claimed that the integrity and historical character of *The Tonight Show* depended on its 10:35 time slot, and moving it would lead to the program's "destruction." While all of this is pretty trivial in the face of our world's troubles—most significantly the Haiti earthquake that occurred simultaneously with this TV programming blow-up—the controversy has revealed the passion and importance of something happening at the "right" time.

The Jay/Conan kerfluffle has made me think about how a sense of time is a component of a sense of place. Among the jokes thrown about in this latest round of late-night wars is that at 12:05 a.m. (the Eastern Time proposed starting time for Conan's *Tonight Show*), it's no longer "tonight" but "tomorrow." Of course, here in the central Midwest, 11:05 p.m. would still be "tonight." I have long found the TV programming of Eastern Time alienating. Midnight does seem awfully late to be watching your favorite talk show. "The 11 o'clock news" also is a bizarre concept to my middle-land sensibilities. Ten o'clock is when the news is "supposed" to come on! Central Time is "right" time!

Okay, before I go further, a few caveats. 1) I realize that much of what I'm talking about is

a factor of what I am personally used to having grown up in the Central Time Zone. 2) I realize that television programming is hardly of such consequence that one should schedule, let alone define, one's life around it. 3) I realize that nearly half of Americans (47 percent) live in the Eastern Time Zone, and, when the



Pacific Time Zone is added (Pacific network television programming follows Eastern's schedule), we're approaching two-thirds (61 percent) of the U.S. population.

Having said all that, I must admit that I found my two years living in Eastern Time disconcerting. I also admit to viewing the late evening local news and at least a bit of David Letterman's *Late Show*. In Michigan, that was 11 p.m.-12:30 a.m. Even so, it didn't seem to me that Michiganders' work schedules were much different from Iowans' to accommodate this perversion of all that is right and good in the world. I taught at Michigan State, and indeed there were the dreaded 8 a.m. classes. I found sunrise and sunset in Michigan even more perplexing. Being on the western edge of Eastern Time, the actual placement of the sun wasn't much different from Chicagoland. So summer sunset at 10 p.m. made me feel more like I had moved to another planet than just across the big lake. (Don't even get me started on all the mucking around with Daylight Saving Time in the last 10 or 15 years.)

I know that even within time zones, the light

of sunrise and sunset vary. My family and I also lived for two years 500 miles to the north, in Moorhead, Minnesota, and we spend time during the summer in the Northwoods near Ely, Minnesota, at about the same latitude as Moorhead. Both locations are closer enough to the "land of the midnight sun" to make a difference, and 10 p.m. summer sunsets are the norm—as are 4 p.m. winter sunsets!

Of course, Earth's orbit about the sun is the most natural thing in the world. And what that means for when we see the sun is inherently and absolutely "right" for that particular place on Earth. What we do in designating arbitrary clock designations, *Tonight*

**At 12:05 a.m. Eastern Time, The Tonight Show would no longer be "tonight" but "tomorrow."**

*Show* starting times, and class schedules is merely human decision making. Our experience of place should be most fundamentally grounded in the rhythms, patterns and behaviors of the Earth. But, inescapably, our daily human existence must involve at least some artificial time constructs. And our experience of place is also very much grounded in the daily rhythms and patterns of everyday human existence.

Obviously, new and different experiences that shake us from our assumptions and dislodge us from what we're used to are good, as they give us new perspectives on human life and the natural world. But fitting into the grooves of the same experiences, day after day, also adds to the profundity of life in place. Continuity of experience is just as important to deep experience and wise living. So for this guy who has spent a good chunk of his life living between 41 and 43 degrees north, and 91 and 87 degrees west, I'll go ahead and call the middle of Central Time "right time." And I'll say with a Midlander's pride and stubbornness that the late local news "should" begin at 10 p.m.—when it's dark—and *The Tonight Show*, whoever is sitting at the desk, "should" begin at 10:30 p.m. **lv**

*Thomas Dean wishes he could be both a night owl and an early bird.*



# Breaking the Ice

I read a little bit about ice skating before strapping on my skates. The advice on a wiki was intimidating. It advised me, a beginner, to strap on elbow guards, wrist guards and other protective gear. It strongly recommended a helmet.

However, whenever I walk past the ice rink in Coral Ridge Mall, there always seems to be

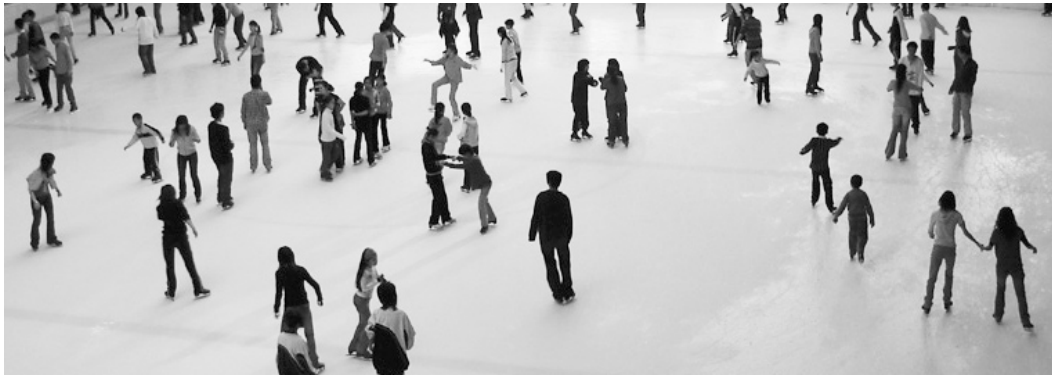
movie routine.

Luckily, the Coral Ridge Ice Arena makes skating possible year-round, but when the weather cooperates this time of year, City Park lends good ice to the sport, too.

Once I stepped onto the ice, I felt completely out of my element. Luckily my partner grabbed my hand and helped me regain some stability.

him that I never knew, like how he was a huge fan of the Detroit Red Wings when he was younger. He skated around with stars in his eyes while he named off his favorite players back in the day.

I seriously impressed myself (and my boyfriend) with how well I was doing. That is until my first fall. I was gliding along by myself, started to get a bit wobbly, and then BAM! Going against everything I had been



Conversation eventually switched from helping me skate to other topics.

several kids gliding around effortlessly. I was never one of those kids. I was always the kid that scooted along the wall, holding on with a death grip.

I decided to channel those other kids out there at the mall today, go helmetless and try to do more skating than scooting. After all, ice skating is an easy way to burn calories while having some fun. Just a half hour of skating can burn more than 250 calories in a half hour (for a 160-pound person).

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, we were trying to find a date night activity that would be a little more exciting than the standard dinner and movie routine.

To help me in my quest to master (read: not fall down onto) the ice, I solicited the help of my boyfriend. I have wanted to try ice skating again, but I needed someone to help me get motivated and survive my adventure. In the spirit of Valentine's Day, we were trying to find a date night activity that would be a little more exciting than the standard dinner and

With his help I worked on standing on the ice, and then I slowly started moving. Those first steps made me feel like a cartoon who had a rug pulled out from beneath them, but my boyfriend kept me from falling.

We slowly started moving around the rink. Throughout the lap my boyfriend kept giving me advice. "Don't be so tense—try to loosen up your muscles," he said. "Keep your knees bent and lean forward." Those were the biggest pieces of advice he had for me.

After 15 minutes on the ice I started skating around sans help. I even was able handle the corners, albeit somewhat gingerly. Per my boyfriend's advice, anytime I started feeling uneasy on my skates, I put my hands on my knees and regained a more solid center of gravity.

My fears of ice skating established when I was much younger were dissipating rapidly. I was having fun and it wasn't even very difficult. Conversation with my boyfriend eventually switched from helping me skate to other topics. I began finding things out about

told, I apparently didn't lean forward when I starting getting a bit shaky and ended up flat on

my back on the cold ice. Within seconds my boyfriend sped across the rink and slid down onto the ice next to me. The fall hurt, but once I realized I wasn't injured, everything was fine. So we laid on the ice laughing until we had the strength to try to stand up again and skate some more.

After that, I wasn't afraid to fall any more, and part of the reason is the support I had. Instead of leaning on the wall for support, I leaned on my boyfriend. Trying new activities and adventures are more fun when you try them with someone you like, whether they are a friend, spouse or partner. Friends can make exercise fun. That person can give you support and help you develop the confidence to succeed at these activities. So grab a friend and get moving, whether it is on ice skates or not. **lv**

*Kelly Ostrem recommends being smart when doing any activity. To quote comedian Bob Nelson: "Always wear protective gear... Don't ever go on the field without these things on because you could get seriously killed."*

# Brains, Brawn & Beauty

When I first moved to Iowa City I would get knocked off kilter when attractive women I didn't know would smile and nod at me when we'd pass each other by on the sidewalk or in an aisle at the grocery store or the public library.

This was a lot different from the "make no eye contact, keep your purse clenched under your arm like a football, keys in your hand ready to strike at the eyes" posture I was accustomed to seeing women adopt when I lived in Chicago.

I've seen women in Iowa City walking down the street with actual footballs clenched under their arm but they never looked like they were about to straight-arm me. I've also seen them clenching stacks of books and cases of beer and sometimes even bags of compost they were taking to their garden someplace—but always with good humor. From time to time they've even clenched my heart too, and however long they've held it for, I've always been better off for it.

Okay, perhaps the women back in Chicago they weren't *all* quite so ready to attack but they certainly weren't in the habit of smiling at strangers on the street. Maybe they would if they had a clipboard in their hands and were asking if you "had a few minutes for the environment" or whatever cause du jour they were shilling for that week, or if it were the kind of neighborhood that was in the news a lot for women being *very* friendly to strangers and were often arrested for it as a result.

The first dozen or so times this happened to me I actually turned around to look over my shoulder to see who it was they were smiling at.

When I saw no one there behind me and I realized that I was the intended recipient of their smile I'd respond with pointless, half-hearted waves to their backs that they never saw and a lot of them might have mistaken me for being shy.

I was simply not accustomed to strangers

acknowledging each other on the street without some scheme being involved.

Though such friendliness is often referred to as being a "Midwestern" phenomenon, Chicago—where I'm from—is a part of the Midwest, and I certainly never experienced anything like this there.

There's probably some dry sociological reason that explains this difference, but I just like to think that it's because the women in Iowa City are uniquely wonderful.

They're untainted by the cynicism and world-weariness and leerness of strangers that women from bigger cities seem to have, which so often turns the act of getting to know someone well enough just to ask for their number into something only slightly less dangerous

tight black tights that appeals to me.

Sure, because of The University of Iowa, there are more drop-dead gorgeous women here than anywhere else I've ever lived—more than enough distracting eye candy to guarantee a legion of auto-body shops a brisk business all year round.

But whatever passing thrill that the mere sight of them may provide you with will ultimately be a fleeting one.

The best part about growing old with someone is the time you get to spend together while you're doing it. The person who first caught your eye in short-shorts on the pedmall or shirtless while playing Ultimate Frisbee at age 20 would probably cause you to burst out laughing if you saw them wearing the same



Images courtesy [www.flickr.com/twoforofashion](http://www.flickr.com/twoforofashion)

than a high-wire unicycle act performed above a mine field.

I moved to Iowa City to be with one amazing woman and stuck around to be with a second amazing one when the first relationship didn't work out. The second relationship didn't work out either, ultimately, but I have no regrets about either and I'm going to stick around for a while because there's no place else in the world I'd rather keep trying to get it right.

A friend of mine who spent some time in the Army called our town a "target-rich environment" when he came for a visit once, and, numbers-wise, I suppose he was right.

But it's not the fresh batch of young co-eds spit out of a hopper someplace who arrive here each fall and turn the town into that *Star Trek* episode where they visit the planet of blond girls who all wear too big sunglasses and too

outfit 30 or 40 or 50 years later.

But that's okay, because if you're still together 50 years later I think you've probably impressed each other plenty enough already.

No, it's not the quantity of women here or their beauty or youth that makes Iowa City such a wonderful place to live—it's the quality.

All the women I've known in Iowa possess a certain kindness, practicality and intelligence I've never encountered anywhere else. They laugh out loud unabashedly. They'll not only watch football with you without prodding, they'll follow the game and understand what's happening on the field and offer color commentary better than what's on TV. Not only will they not balk at the idea of eating biscuits and gravy, they'll *make* it for you. To me, these are uniquely Iowa traits.

Perhaps these qualities can be found in



women from big cities. Maybe they've even existed in women from big cities I've dated. If so, I was either dating the wrong women or I didn't date the right ones long enough to find out about it.

A woman I dated in Chicago once called to ask me to come hang some shelves for her. A woman I dated in Iowa City once called me to ask if she could borrow my table saw so she could cut her own.

### **Sure, flowers and candy may be nice but new tires last a lot longer.**

I think that's pretty damn cool.

Though it's Chicago that's immortalized as the "City of Big Shoulders," none of the women I ever dated there actually had them and this is a vastly underappreciated quality when seeking out a mate, I think.

Nor did they have the broad hips and strong backs and solid arms and legs that women here have. Maybe a few of them did but only if it was the result of time spent in soft lighting with some \$75-per-hour personal trainer while sipping bottled water in a gym while hooked up to a Pilates machine that did all the work for them and they were barely breaking a sweat.

No, the women in Iowa City come by their impressive statures honestly, from hard work done in good humor because it was required of them and everybody has to pull their own weight out on the prairie.

None of the girlfriends I had when I lived in Chicago had ever bailed hay or used a post-hole digger to dig holes for a barbed wire fence or spent two hours lugging 50-pound feed bags into the barn in the middle of a blizzard.

Some of the women I've had the pleasure to know here in Iowa actually have. I've seen it.

This sort of honest labor cultivates an entirely different outlook on life than if you come from a long line of stock brokers, lawyers and art dealers and your doorman carries the groceries you ordered online into the lobby for you when they're delivered to your high-rise by Peapod.

Because of these experiences, they know firsthand that life can be hard and often involves hard work. As a result, small, thoughtful, practical acts that can make it a little easier from time to time will be seen as the romantic gestures they truly are—not merely chores outsourced to the boyfriend.

Sure, flowers and candy may be nice but new tires last a lot longer.

I think of these things now that Valentine's Day is upon us and men will be inundated with instructions on what to buy to express our "true feelings" for that someone special.

If you're with the right person, just mowing their lawn for them while they're at work or surprising them with an 80-pound bag of rock salt in the wintertime can do the trick.

Somehow I don't think that small, practical displays of affection like these would carry the same weight in a place where people didn't have to do these things themselves or hired out for them if they did.

Women in Iowa City don't tend to put on airs. They put on sunscreen in the summer and chapstick in the winter and bug spray in between and that's about it.

They don't ask to be impressed with outlandish displays of wealth to demonstrate your affection, and they understand that bowling is a perfectly acceptable anniversary date, that ice skating can be just as passionate as Tango dancing if you're good enough (or bad enough) at it and that spending an evening in with some rented movies is more than enough excitement for a Saturday night because hey, you're that much closer to the bedroom stay-

ing in, and that was where you were headed all along, right?

Things like skyboxes and bottle service and V.I.P. rooms haven't yet entered the everyday nightlife picture here and I doubt they'd catch on if they did. Any of the women I've known here in Iowa would see them for the gaudy and ostentatious extravagances that they are.

A few PBRs and some burgers at George's is more than enough to make for a romantic evening if you're with the right person. How could that possibly be improved upon?

So, if you have someone you're spending Valentine's Day with, go there together to celebrate it. Sit in a dark booth and lean in close and be thankful and laugh together and whisper sweet things in each others' ears. They don't even have to be true as long as your feelings for each other are.

### **I've never met a woman from Iowa City who put on airs. They put on sunscreen in the summer and chap-stick in the winter and bug spray in between and that's about it.**

And if you don't have someone special you're spending Valentine's Day with this year, just remember where you are and that it will be well worth the wait if you're lucky enough to find that person here. When you do, remember it was Iowa City that brought you together and be thankful for that too.

Happy Valentine's Day, Iowa City. **lv**

*Yale Cohn is uncertain as to the true origins of Valentine's Day but is glad there is something lighthearted to break up the wretched dreariness otherwise known as the month of February.*



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MIX

MAKER

When I was in Washington, D.C., last month for a conference, I met a guy who goes by the name of DJ Earworm. In January, Earworm had the number one video in all of Youtube: "United State of Pop 2009," an intricate and dizzying audio-visual mashup. It's part of an ongoing annual series Earworm makes that mashes the year's *Billboard* Top 25

Pop Hits into a carefully crafted five minutes of pure ADD pleasure. He was in D.C. serving as a panelist who discussed remix culture from the point of view of a producer, and he also deejayed the conference's after party. I'm a curious person, so I started talking to him about his work, and found out that Earworm—born Jordan Roseman—is an Iowa City native!

**LITTLE VILLAGE:** *When I met you, I recall you saying that you had a musical background before you started doing cut and paste music; am I remembering correctly? And can you tell me how you got into doing what you do now?*

**EARWORM:** Yeah, I grew up in several musical households. My mother plays piano, and is involved with my stepfather's record store, Real Records (203 North Linn St. in Iowa City). My father plays many instruments and a variety of traditional styles, and is in two local bands, Stones in the Field and Spontaneous Combustion. I grew up playing piano and making up songs, studied music theory and computer science in college, spent some time producing music, writing songs, and then kind of fell into making mashups. I thought they were fun, kind of like playing a musical game, and people really seemed to respond, so I just kept on making them.

**LV:** *How does your musical background inform your deejay work? For instance, you told me that you file your loops into different folders according to the musical key.*

**EARWORM:** I try to mix music that's sounds good harmonically. It makes the tracks just flow together. I'll shift the pitch if necessary,

Iowa City native DJ Earworm



or just use the rules of harmony to limit myself as to which songs I'll mix together.

**LV:** *Can you explain why it's important for you to build your remixes that way, in terms of making a nice sounding remixed composition?*

**EARWORM:** In music there are 12 different notes, and each combination of notes has its own distinctive sound. Some combinations sound considerably more pleasant than others, a sensation we experience as harmony. Knowing which of the note combinations you're hitting, and when, and why, can really help you express music—since much of the drama and beauty of music is experienced through the fluctuations in the harmony.

**LV:** *How would you describe what you do to someone who isn't familiar with remix culture?*

**EARWORM:** I take a bunch of pieces of music

**I thought they were fun, kind of like playing a musical game, and people really seemed to respond, so I just kept on making them.**

apart and put them back together into a new song. It's kind of like a medley, except the sounds are layered on top of each other, perhaps with vocals from one song accompanying instruments from another. My goal is to make a music collage that sounds like one song.

**LV:** *What do you say to someone who thinks that sampling and remixing is just a lazy way of making music?*

**EARWORM:** It can be. It's possible to do very

little work, but, believe me, it's possible to spend a lot of time and energy on a re-sampled work. I think it's wonderful that people without a lot of musical know-how can experiment with music and express themselves musically.

**LV:** *What software and hardware do you use to make your music and those videos? And if someone is just starting out doing this kind of work, what software would you recommend they use?*

**EARWORM:** I use Ableton Live and Final Cut Pro. I'd recommend Ableton Live or ACID for making the music.

**LV:** *Didn't you say your dad is a math professor at The University of Iowa? Did you spend time in Iowa City, and did you start remixing then?*

**EARWORM:** Yes he is, and also currently the

## MORE EARWORM

*United State of Pop 2009 is DJ Earworm's big breakout hit, but it's not his only popular mashup. Here are four other mix-ups worth YouTubeing.*

### **United State of Pop 2007**

Earworm put the first United States of Pop mix together at the suggestion of his manager. It was also the first boot-leg mashup to ever cross over into the *Billboard* Top 100.

### **Backwards/Forwards**

Commissioned by Annie Lennox as a career retrospective. Like many of Earworm's mashups, the nine-song

mix is accompanied by a synched-up video mashup.

### **Beautiful Mashup**

An official Sean Kingston mashup by Earworm features some of Kingston's hits blended with then-unreleased singles from his upcoming album.

### **Reckoner Lockdown**

Minimalist by United State of Pop standards, this song mashes Reckoner by Radiohead with Love Lockdown by Kanye West. This one's not commissioned, but Kanye approved, linking the MP3 download from his blog.

chairman of the Johnson County Democratic Party. My mother was also faculty at the university at one point. I grew up in Iowa City, going to Henry Sabin and Lincoln elementary schools, but didn't start messing around with electronic music until a bit later.

**LV:** *Are your parents worried about the potential copyright liabilities caused by the music you make? Are you?*

**EARWORM:** I think we all have a realistic assessment of the risks involved. I'm aware, but I can't worry.

**LV:** *Have you ever had a copyright owner complain about your use of their work? If not, or if it doesn't happen regularly, why do you*

**EARWORM** CONTINUED ON PAGE 11>>



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# Big Dreams

Valentine's Day is nearly upon us: the season of love and kisses, of hearts and flowers, of infinite romantic possibility, right?

"Let's face it," says Angie Toomsen of Dreamwell Theater. "It's a totally lame holiday that glosses over the true complexity of human relationships and makes people feel like crap if they're single or heartbroken."

Okay, so Hearts and Flowers she ain't. But why let one cynical outlook spoil an otherwise idyllic holiday?

"Valentine's Day is a sappy and thoroughly commercial holiday, utterly without merit," adds Dreamwell's Josh Sazon. "Love is not cutesy, love is not sweet and happy and wonderful. For the most part, it really is an absolutely wretched condition to be in, where pain and insecurity and miscommunication and petty jealousy is the order of the day."

Okay, then.

Think of it this way: Remember back to your first junior high romance. Those mortifyingly earnest notes slipped through locker vents between classes, the paralytically stiff slow dancing in the gym during school dances. It was pretty wretched, wasn't it? It only makes sense then, as Dreamwell enters into its 12th year of theater in Iowa City, that

it kicks off the season with a show about love that squirms with the fear and loathing of everyone's adolescent romantic experience.

That show is *Down With Love: an Anti-Valentine's Day Valentine's Cabaret*, an

February 14th at the Mill Restaurant starting at 7:30 p.m.

That's right: Valentine's Day.

And don't expect Dreamwell's tween rebellion to stop there. Co-founder and past Board President Matt Falduto



Director/performer Josh Sazon works with performer Mark McKusker

**"Love is not cutesy, love is not sweet and happy and wonderful. For the most part, it really is an absolutely wretched condition to be in."**

**-DIRECTOR JOSH SAZON**

predicts a season that will both entertain audiences and challenge their assumptions about theater.

"We call the season *A Taboo Bijou*, as every show tackles a taboo subject," he explains, almost giddy with the possibility. *Taboo theater in Iowa?* you ask, chuckling as you ruffle the hair of this audaciousness 12-year-old upstart theater company. *Isn't that cute? How edgy can it really be?*

Be warned: This is not the idle threat of a junior high hooligan. The very next show



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on Dreamwell's calendar promises to be a flaming bag of dog mess left on the doorstep of conservative and mundane theater traditions, and they've invited the audience to be in on the prank.

"Poona the Fuckdog [by University of Iowa grad Jeff Goode] hilariously skewers everything from language to sex to terrorism to religion to sex again," Falduto explains. "There's a giant singing penis, for God's sake." Though the show is subtitled "(and other plays for children)," Falduto warns that this show is definitely *not* for children, not even the most precocious 12-year-old, nor for the faint of heart. But for the rest of us, hidden in the bushes as Dreamwell strikes the match and rings the doorbell, he promises it will be impossible not to laugh out loud.

In March, Dreamwell will produce *Blackbird*, the story of a woman who confronts

the dawn of time: They want to move out of their parent's basement and get a place of their own.

"We have one major goal and that's a new home," explains Falduto. "We've been doing shows [on the basement stage] at Unitarian Universalist since the beginning and we've ventured to other locations in the past decade, but we really want a permanent home to call our own."

The company will be saving their allowance, and any tax-deductible contributions audience members and lovers of the theater care to make, through 2010 in the hopes of setting up their own space in 2011.

But that is some time off, and for now, Dreamwell is all about getting *Down With Love*.

"Despite the title, we think this will actually be a fun night for singles and lovebirds alike," explains Angie Toomsen. "You can come enjoy the Mill's food and drinks and have some fun, quality entertainment. You don't have to hate Valentine's Day to have a great time."

But it might help, right?

"The painful aspects of love sometimes seem easier to stomach that the syrupy sweet stuff," she explains, but is quick

to add, "Just to be clear, if my boyfriend forgets Valentine's Day this year, he's dead." **IV**

*Adam Witte is a Language Arts teacher at Washington High School in Cedar Rapids. He will be performing with SPT Theater's "Writer's Room" series at the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art on February 12-13 at 7:30 p.m. His greatest work, however, is done on the feline ranch he runs with his beautiful and patient wife, Candice. He is a lucky man.*



### The very next show on Dreamwell's calendar promises to be a flaming bag of dog mess left on the doorstep of conservative and mundane theater traditions.

the man who had been her lover when she was only a child as he leaves prison. Then, in the summer, Dreamwell will stage *9 Parts of Desire*, a play about the women of Iraq and how they deal with love and pain in a time of war and change. The season mixes the satirical with the serious, the sacred with the profane, in the spirit of every young punk.

As they look to the future, the teen years looming ahead, Falduto and crew dream the dream that every teenager has nurtured since

### >> EARWORM FROM PAGE 9

*think that is?*

**EARWORM:** It's never happened! Quite the opposite, I've been approached many times to make mashups for artists. I think most artists realize that a good mashup functions as promotion, and rather than eating into their sales and profits, it actually benefits them.

**LV:** *Is there an underlying idea behind mashing up the Billboard Top 25?*

**EARWORM:** People shift their buying habits according to their changing needs. Last year, a good number of songs were essentially songs of seduction, so I tried to craft a soft sexy vibe. This year, people needed a bit more comfort, so they bought songs that were reassuring—as in Jay Sean's "Down" or Keri Hilson's "Knock You Down," or inspirational, as in Beyonce's "Halo" or Miley Cyrus's "The Climb." I wanted to encapsulate these feelings as well as to celebrate the music that can bring that comfort and inspiration.

**LV:** *What's it like to have the number one video in all of YouTube? I just opened the most recent Entertainment Weekly and saw that your 2009 video was No. 1 in their The List section at the front of the mag. Crazy.*

**EARWORM:** Crazy is right! It's great, kind of hard to believe the intensity and quantity of feedback, but I appreciate it immensely! **IV**

*Kembrew McLeod lives and teaches in Iowa City. He is spending the winter days learning all the various different "ass" dances described throughout the decades in popular song. After that, he can truly say that he is putting the ass back into his job title, associate professor.*

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# Love <sup>in</sup>the Time of Syllabi

If the odd clan of former English majors has one supposedly obvious thing in common, it's our love of reading. You don't spend thousands of dollars perfecting literacy unless you mean it. I sure as hell can't get a job scouring Shakespeare for tips on making efficiency efficient, or whatever business types do. I've taken to adding "so I went to

To all my former professors that might pick up this magazine and fall faint from the words or give me the good riddance I probably deserve: This isn't about you. You'll be happy to know my story does not have a tragic arc. This

chapter timelines and assignments, midterm and almost-final and final papers and quizzes, a smattering of directed historical responses here, a group project there. The book is the center of it, the cherished prop, the purpose for the statements—but in the clatter of it all, the central relationship to the work isn't nurtured. To a large extent, it can't be. Professors can't give me an A for my deeper appreciation for love and regret in Willa Cather's *My Mortal Enemy*—they can grade a paper I'd write on such themes, sure, but that's more a rating of my rhetorical skill than a judgment of what I'll take with me beyond the classroom.

In a perfect world, both meet in holy union. Despite repeated attempts in high school and early college, I doubt I would have finished James Joyce's *Ulysses* without a full class devoted to forcing me through. I would not have found Rushdie so soon, nor Joan Didion. Cather wouldn't

I took my  
literary  
pills and  
came back  
reporting fine  
intellectual  
health.

school to go back to school" to the end of my field of study listing—and seeing that starting a masters in social work is on my agenda for 2010, my invented truism seems solid.

Upon undergraduating in May of 2008, however, I had a terrible realization. This love of the book—that youth-spawned fawning over perfect or beautifully messy concoctions of stories and characters and ideas and phrases—had somehow been lost. I lost my craving for hitting chapter marks and reading revelatory quotes to patient friends and bored family members. I suddenly remembered that I hadn't had a "to-read" list in years. My consumption had been prescribed and, like any good student, I took my literary pills and came back reporting fine intellectual health—usually in the form of five-to-seven-page essays. I didn't read "what I wanted," or to seek out whatever that meant. I just didn't have the time.

is paradise found then lost and then regained, if that's any sort of classically recognized structure (those were never my specialty). This is about how I learned to stop analyzing and love the book, the fulfilling third act in American English majors' lives. I hope it's shared.

Something happens in the midst of the semester reading schedule. The syllabus lists

have stood a chance against William Faulkner, though I now know I prefer the former.

Often, however, exercises are just exercises. I can't remember much about Oscar Wilde's work, despite taking an entire class on his decadent life and times. William Blake held more of a visual interest than a poetic one—there was just so much to get through! So little time! And the sum of it all? Pockets of understanding, a few puzzle-pieced papers and a good grade. Enough for most. But for love?

Even my favorite book, Marilynn Robinson's



Left without  
a syllabus,  
the freedom  
was crushing.



*Housekeeping*—somehow discovered during the off-season—was put through the academic wringer. I decided to write my 50-page honors thesis about how Robinson's novels fit into the post-whatever literary canon. My discovery? They don't. A lot of mental muscles were pulled in the process; a less-than-buff treatise churned out. For almost two years I couldn't do much but recommend it, couldn't even flip through underlined passages...

But now, hallelujahs in hand, I've fallen again for the book. For *books*, for years-long reading lists, for stuffing bags overfull with pages and pages of...whatever I want. I'm turned on, you voluptuous literary safehouse of wonder. You best prepare yourself.

A year ago for this magazine, I wrote a feature about the smattering of used bookstores in the Iowa City area ("Afloat Upon a Sea of Books"). My love affair with books was in its dormant, tragic, abusive phase—but perhaps the beginning of the turnaround. I remember talking to Nialle Sylvan, owner of The Haunted Bookstore on North Linn Street, about how the stacks of her store's books left

me depressed. To continue the article title's metaphor: Weighed down by the vast abyss of letters of all types and thoughts, I was drowning. Left without a syllabus, the freedom was crushing—I kept returning to her store to browse for a half-hour before hanging my head low and walking out empty-handed.

This shouldn't be a problem in our newly coronated City of Literature, I thought. The streets were to be paved with discarded hard-bound "World's Greatest Literature" volumes! It would rain metaphors! And yet my bookshelves remained pretty but neglected—I read, but only accompanied by my lesser mistress, the internet.

Thank god for Roberto Bolaño. And for my fellow ex-Englishers who by peer pressure and personal libraries got me started last March reading *2666*, that 900-plus page masterwork that took me into its study and taught me to have faith anew. No, the page count wasn't easy. No, reading about mass rape and murder in Bolaño's fictionalized version of Ciudad Juárez was everything but beautiful. But the book had weight, literal and spiritual weight. The massive failures of his characters—the critics, journalists, police and writers—to honestly wrest with the atrocity of our times struck me hard.

I don't know how Bolaño's work falls within the scope/movements of his literary contemporaries. Frankly, I don't care. Perhaps I could

scramble back through my dog-eared pages and underlined passages and compose a gradable essay—but ultimately, I would have to read with this goal in mind. Book love is best when the relationship proceeds as a conversation, the writer's singular thoughts meshing with the unique web of my own. *2666* had a large hand in helping me decide I wanted to go into social work, to try to engage with the crappy realities of the world on a practical as well as intellectual track.

Reading this in class would have given me the tools to expand Bolaño's world, made me think in context of a well-considered essay prompt, etc. Really, this is what I went to school for: to be introduced to ways of thought, methods of research—access to otherwise obscured doors. But as for the book, I prefer my selfish rediscovery. Only the most vulgar writers create to spawn academic articles. I'm sure the reasons vary, but I think most write with

the hope that us readers will fall in love. Romance is best outside the classroom.

So I carry around at least two books with me wherever I go, typically a novel and

something nonfiction. Unrestrained again, I can sneak passages of David Simon and Ed Burn's *The Corner* during work breaks, fill long New York City subway rides with Milan Kundera's relationship meta-meditations from *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, lose my appetite forever with Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, or scare while contemplating a potentially pathetic future with Keith Gessen's *All the Sad Young Literary Men*. Perhaps this will be the year I crack Nabokov's *Lolita*, finish the rest of Updike's *Rabbit* series, or knock off a whole row of my youth's used book collection—previously marked for "future" consumption.

For now, I will weigh myself down with more Bolaño (*The Savage Detectives*) and Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals*, with the hope that great books continue to fall into my bag. Perhaps I'm misinterpreting my three-act romance and I'm in for a five-part tragedy of ancient sorts. Come what may. I have a wonderful feeling, however, that despite whatever misadventures lay around the corner—college round two, 2012, balding—the book and I are tangled together for good. **lv**

*Paul Sorenson still knows there are truckloads of books he's missing. You can email him to recommend whatever your heart desires or yell at him until your heart's content at paul@littlevillagemag.com.*

Now, hallelujahs in hand, I've fallen again for the book.

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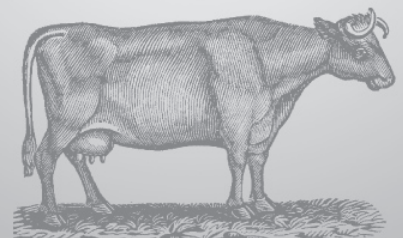
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# e-volution

**I**t is important to note that I might be the least qualified person to write about e-books. I didn't even own an e-typewriter or an e-phone until last year. Like some sort of technological Rip Van Winkle, I have awoken to find a world where the letter "e" before any word transforms it into some marvelous must-have device. The e-book somehow symbolizes something darker to me than abandoning my rotary phone for a flashy little texting machine.

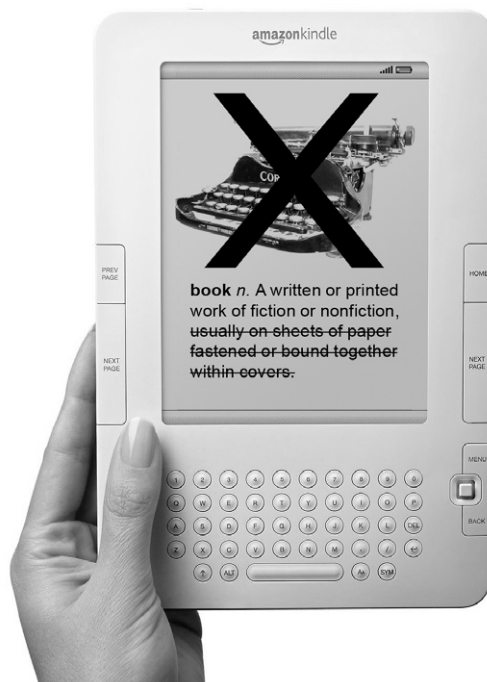
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When I finally fondled the Kindle, the e-reader from Amazon.com, it was hardly the fetish object I expected.

A whiplash negative reaction to the idea of e-text devouring the printed word comes easy to the lips when lazily drinking with friends at George's. People get a dreamy look in their eye and start softly talking about how they need the smell of a book. They need to run their fingers over the rough-hewn pages like an old lover they keep going back to. When faced with the idea of electronic books and what they symbolize, my face contorts and I imagine an extreme world where I am a mix of Robert Duvall in *THX-1138* and Malcolm McDowell in *A Clockwork Orange*. Will I be trapped in an all-white world, eyes artificially pulled open, and forced to read Dan Brown while sitting in a white plastic penis-shaped chair?

Sadly, no. When I finally fondled the Kindle, the e-reader from Amazon.com, it was hardly the fetish object I expected. It was

light and flimsy. It had a non-threatening grey screen and just a few VCR-type buttons. This was the machine that would take away my Alistair-Cooke-by-the-fire scenarios of reading? My oversized book on Giotto frescoes



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could crush this meager machine like a Hulk Hogan Atomic Leg Drop. How could my beloved *Videohound Golden Movie Retriever 2010* possibly breathe inside this tiny thing?

My misconceptions abounded. This e-device isn't for early 14th-century masterpieces or researching the filmography of Clint Howard. The e-reader is for easy reading. Portable. Quick. Cheap. It's for the reader that needs something to read all the time. At the restaurant waiting for your food. At the bus stop. In line at the post office. Like some sort of e-security blanket for the avid reader, one of these devices can keep your *New Yorker* and the eight paperbacks you are working on in

one little device at all times. It is not the filet mignon of techno-gadgets, it's the Hamburger Helper.

For the reader who just wants to read, it works. But will having only one function render it quickly obsolete? The truth is that we are in a time of great transition from where the institution of the printed word must make room for its more freewheeling electronic counterpart which is coming into the everyday hard and fast.

This was the machine that would take away my Alistair-Cooke-by-the-fire scenarios of reading?

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Currently there are three main players in the e-reader game. Amazon's Kindle has made the biggest splash in the market, but maintains a closed system. With a cartel-like sensibility the Bezos gang wants you to only use their software and their database. As I came to understand the model I couldn't help but think of Sony and the ill-fated Betamax. My friend Michelle, whose Kindle I fondled, gave me the bottom line on why her first generation e-reader works for her.

“Kindle made the first feasible technology which was fast and had cheap downloads with a iTunes-like model,” she said. She continues on with her hierarchy on reading ethics, “I don’t want books to go away, but you can’t buy everything. I buy hardcovers of authors I know, love, want to re-read, possibly one day teach and possibly could love.” For her Kindle she has her quick reads, the kind she wants when she is at the gym or on a plane. She adds, “It does one thing really well.”

The Iowa City Public Library launched its



e-reader online collection in December. If you want to use the ICPL's new EPUB e-books from the Overdrive collection you will need a Sony reader or a Barnes and Noble's Nook. This collection can also be read on your home computer by downloading a free Adobe reader program available through the ICPL website. Kara Logsdon, the Adult Services Coordinator at ICPL kindly showed me how the program works. By signing into the ICPL website, one can peruse what is available and check it out for your e-reader at home.

"It works like a traditional library model," she explained. "You can choose to check out an e-book for seven to 14 days. The file expires after the lending period. The bonus is that there are no late fees."

And just like the other books in the library, if someone has checked out the e-edition, you can put it on reserve for when it is available. When I glanced over Kara's head to the aisles of books on the main floor I couldn't help but be overwhelmed with the idea of where

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Every day ICPL's e-collection grows, with a yearly budget of \$10,000 for purchasing nonfiction and fiction e-titles.

to even start the e-collection. Jason Paulios, the ICPL's fiction e-book selector informed me that they start with the current New York Times bestseller list along with the Indiebound bestseller list. From those current popular ti-

E-BOOKS CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 >>

# Oh No You Di'int

## 7 Ways the IC Grammar Police Will Call You Out & Embarrass Your Face

*In a city where you can't swing a cat without smashing a Ph.D. in the teeth, there's nowhere to hide from the eagle-eyed grammar police. Here are a few common reasons your grammar might be less than "fresh."*

- 1. "Unnecessary" quotation marks**—So your fish is "fresh," huh? You've got a "new" bike for sale? When you put quotation marks around something, it either means you are quoting a person, or that the word inside the quotes is the opposite of what you really mean. You know, sarcasm? In this case, the fish is rank and your bike is rusty. Use with extreme caution.
- 2. It's/Its, Your/You're**—Apostrophe=contraction, no apostrophe=possession. *You're* a big kid now. *It's* time to get this in your brain, for permanent.
- 3. Irregardless**—This one's wrong. Terribly, embarrassingly wrong. Delete this from your working vocabulary and save yourself a world of finger pointing, snickering and big tears. Substitute: regardless.
- 4. Alright**—I have been shamed by this one. An old, creaky echo from the hallowed halls of Proper

Grammar University informed me once that "all right" is two words, no matter how much friendlier and more fun it looks as one.

- 5. Reflect back**—Ah, redundancies. Redundancies like this inspire me to imagine myself mirrored into the past, bumping into my current self on the way there, and throttling said current self for using "reflect back" in a sentence.
- 6. Lose/Loose**—This one's always floored me. It gets screwed up all the time, and I'm not quite sure why. Lose as in "lose your keys" and loose as in "loose association" or "screw loose." There's that extra "o," see?
- 7. Anyways**—Replace with "anyway," as in "anyhow" or "in any case." According to UrbanDictionary.com, anyways is "um... basically just a cooler and better version of the word anyway," but it's still wrong. If you choose to use it, consider yourself warned (and probably cooler than me *anyway*).

*Stephanie Catlett is an Iowa City writer, just like everybody else.*



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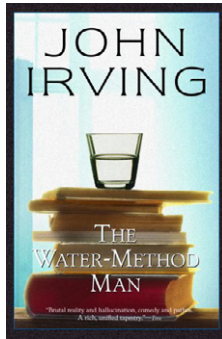
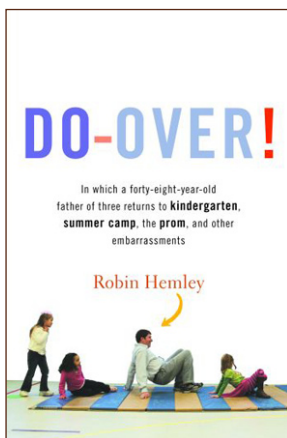
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# Our Town (according to them)

As Iowa Citians, we love to celebrate Iowa City's writers. But oft we forget that writers love to celebrate Iowa City too, by writing our Midwest hamlet into their pages. From autobiographies to airport novels, from the whimsical to the sincere, Iowa City has been the setting for both writers and their books. The list is long and varied; these books are just a snapshot of Iowa City's great literary landscape.

## Robin Hemley *Do-Over!* (2009)

Hemley, the director of the UI Nonfiction Writing Program, does his best Billy Madison in *Do-Over!*, in which he revisits failed moments from his youth including, for instance, a stint at **Iowa City's Horace Mann Elementary School** where he successfully survives kindergarten without pooping his pants. The premise is a great comedic vehicle, and as could be expected, a chance to impart some valuable wisdom.

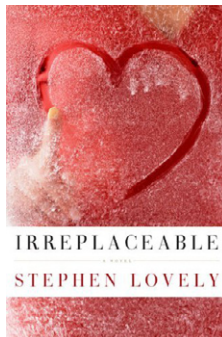
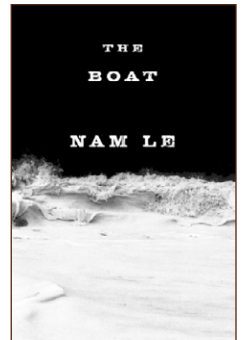


## John Irving *The Water Method Man* (1972)

In what would become a familiar theme for those who passed through Iowa City, legendary author Irving's protagonist is Fred Trumper, a **University of Iowa** graduate student. The water method, as it turns out, is Trumper's chosen treatment for his abnormally narrow urinary tract which involves drinking copious amounts of water before and after sex to flush bacteria from his urethra.

## Nam Le *The Boat* (2008)

The acclaimed debut of another workshop talent, Le's *The Boat* racked up some prestigious hardware, including the Dylan Thomas award. The book collects seven characters with seven stories spanning the globe, the first of which is the self-referential Love and Honor and Pity and Pride and Compassion and Sacrifice, which relates the story of a Vietnamese-born character called Nam Le who is attending a **writing workshop in Iowa City**.

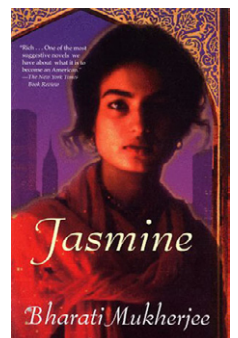


## Stephen Lovely *Irreplaceable* (2009)

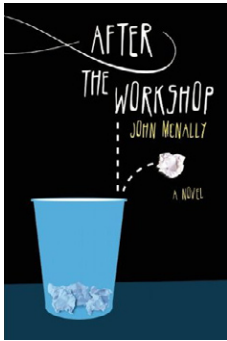
*Irreplaceable* begins with Alex Voorman grading SCAT (Secondary Composition Advancement Testing) essays for **U.S. Exam**, a thinly-veiled reference to an all-to-familiar vocation for Iowa Citians in career limbo. Lovely weaves in plenty of other well-known Iowa City locales like **Java Joe's** and the **New Prairie Co-op**. Equally apparent is Lovely's time as a night clerk at the UI's Intensive Care Unit which delicately informs this story of life, death, loss and redemption.

## Bharati Mukherjee *Jasmine* (1989)

Jyoti begins life in Hasnapur, India before becoming Jasmine, Jase, and finally Jane, married to a banker and living on an Iowa farm. Early on, as Jase, she is asked "How can you leave New York? You belong here, Iowa's dull and it's flat." It would seem that the Iowa of the 1980s was as far removed from New York as India. *Jasmine* is a story of rebirths, culminating in Jane giving birth to the child of a white man at the **The University of Iowa Hospital**.





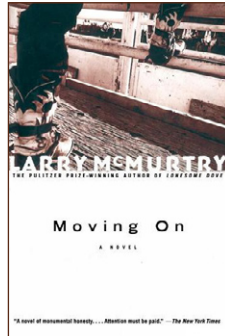


### John McNally *After the Workshop* (2010)

Years after graduating from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, protagonist Jack Sheahan is **still in Iowa City** struggling to complete his novel and making a living as an escort for more successful writers invited to read in our city of lit. Sheahan's world is one that Iowa grad, and former media escort, McNally knows well.

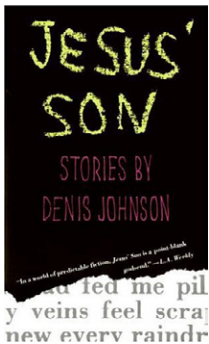
### Larry McMurtry *Moving On* (1970)

Iowa City isn't so much a setting in *Moving On* as it is a notion. It is, for some characters, **the where of moving on**. Set in 1960s Texas, Iowa City represents the rest of life, the future, raising a family. Oddly enough, for many twenty- and thirty-somethings in 2010, Iowa City is that strange place smack in the middle of life's journey between growing up and moving on.



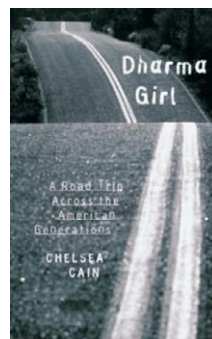
### Denis Johnson *Jesus' Son* (1992)

*Fight Club* author Chuck Palahniuk lists *Jesus' Son* as one of his all-time favorites, which tells a lot about the books sensibilities straight away. It's a fragmented, poetic collection of 11 short stories about drugs, drink and death. The unnamed narrator's tales of mischief, misdeeds and misfortune wander the country including time in Iowa City to get drunk at **The Vine**, for instance.



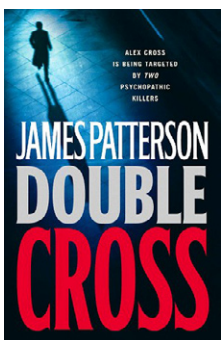
### Chelsea Cain *Dharma Girl* (1996)

Before she became a peddler of gory thrillers, like *Heartsick*, Chelsea Cain was a young girl living on a **hippie commune just outside Iowa City**. Somewhere in between she wrote this memoir of a road trip from Los Angeles to Iowa City with her ailing mother to visit the communal farm of her younger days. On her website, Cain says "this book is flawed and pretty novice in many ways, but it will always be my favorite."



### James Patterson *Double Cross* (2007)

Patterson—who has become more of a crime novel industry head than author with his bevy of assistants and assembly-line approach—sends arch-villain Kyle Craig to Iowa City while on the lam. Craig ambles down the **literary walk**, grabs some wine at **The Sanctuary** and heads to the **UI Main Library** to log into MySpace. High-brow it is not, but best-selling it is. Patterson holds the Guinness World Record for most New York Times best sellers with 51, including former No. 1 *Double Cross*.



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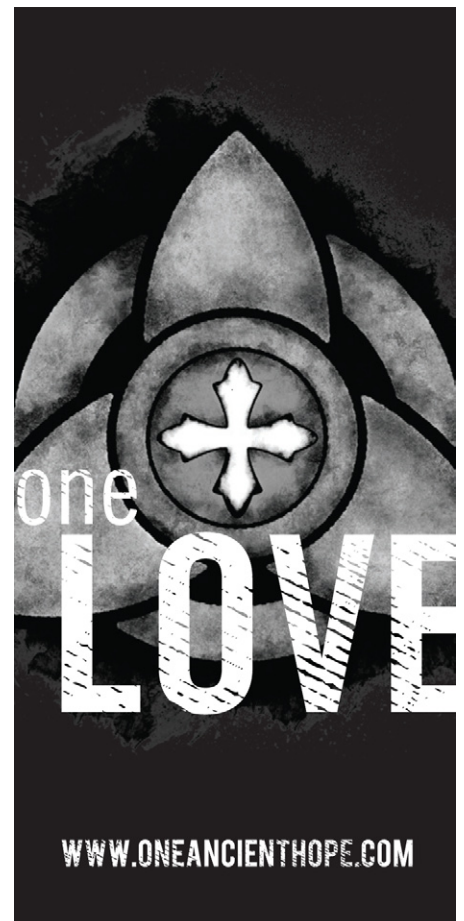
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Audrey Tautou plays Coco Chanel

# Coco Revolution

There are no surprises when the clothes come off. It's only when we put something on that we start revealing ourselves. We're never so naked as when we're wearing our favorite clothes. So, to explore the tensions within the greatest designer of the 20th century is an efficient way of exploring the psychology of her time, which is what Anne Fontaine's new movie does. *Coco Before Chanel*, which plays at the Bijou February 5th through 11th, is extremely well-made: the acting, editing, script, etc., are all impeccable. But the movie has the feel of a contemporary Chanel garment—exquisite but a little staid—rather than one of the startling gowns or Cubist hats designed by Coco herself.

We Americans love to tell ourselves a certain story, most fully revealed in the Western, of a man descending into a savage place and using violence to bring justice to it. The French, on the other hand, when they bother with something so pedestrian as a plot, tend

to reenact the story of their revolution. My favorite versions of this myth are Jean Renoir's *Grand Illusion* and *Rules of the Game*. *Coco* is another mixed-emotion celebration of revolution—in this case, the revolutionizing of fashion through the subversion of the aristocracy's taste.

Coco is played by Audrey Tautou, of *Amélie* fame, who brings a mesmerizing intensity to the role. The central problem of the movie is identity: Coco doesn't know who she is to become, but she knows who she's not. Though lacking the angularity of Coco herself, Tautou's face expresses any number of variations on the tensions of ambition and disgust in her character's relationship to the aristocrats who seem always to be fawning over her.

The story begins with our heroine, Gabrielle at this point, being dropped off at an orphanage by her father, who never returns. (Throughout

the movie she improvises stories about her childhood as she seeks to fashion an identity for herself.) After a time as a dance hall chanteuse, acquiring her nickname by sing-

ing "Coco at the Trocadero," she dodges poverty and destitution by becoming a mistress to Etienne Balsan, marvelously played by Benoît Poelvoorde. Balsan is the quintessential

**There are no surprises when the clothes come off. It's only when we put something on that we start revealing ourselves.**

lovable-hateable aristocrat. When Coco stares awestruck at his huge leather-bound library, he breezily declares, "Don't worry. I haven't read any of them." He oppresses Coco, drunkenly declaring her his "geisha," but he also loves her insofar as his worldview permits. In the meantime, Coco is finding herself—stripping away the fripperies of the luxurious ladies around her, but also admiring something of their power and freedom. Finally, Coco falls



in love with Arthur “Boy” Capel, and their tumultuous love energizes her to emerge as the great designer.

Movies about artists rarely capture much of their process, which is either too boring or too unreachably mysterious for a director. But *Coco* does a good job of lightly suggesting the eye and hand of the maker. A flash of some sailors in blue stripes hauling in their catch in great woven nets immediately suggests to the viewer what it is suggesting to the designer herself. Even in the first scene, when she’s dropped off at the

**Movies about artists rarely capture much of their process, which is either too boring or too unreachably mysterious for a director.**

Ivory production than *Jules et Jim*. In the last scene, when models in *Coco*’s dresses are parading down mirror-lined stairs, and memories flash through the maker’s mind, I felt a little cheated, as if a score by Stravinsky (with whom it’s rumored *Coco* had an affair) and a more exuberant editing style would have really made this fine film blossom.

Gertrude Stein, one of *Coco*’s contemporaries, once remarked that a culture could be judged by its hats. Little did *Coco* know that the revolution she began by putting a man’s



orphanage, a viewer instinctively feels the power of fashion in the pale uniforms and crazy white nun’s habits.

There’s something magical about the first years of the 20th century, just before World War I, when everything was either being lost or found, and everything was possible: flight, universal brotherhood, women in men’s clothes. It’s to the movie’s credit it captures some of this revolutionary feeling with a very light touch; this is no mere biopic. But it’s perhaps to *Coco*’s detriment it feels more like a Merchant-of-

**There’s something magical about the first years of the 20th century, when everything was either being lost or found, and everything was possible.**

hat on a woman’s hairdo would end with a parade of slouchy, odd-turned baseball-and stocking-caps. Ah, well: One of the joys of the movies is the nostalgic journey back to when even the bums wore tilted fedoras and the beauties something with a feather. **IV**

*Scott Samuelson teaches philosophy at Kirkwood Community College. He is also sometimes a moderator on KCRG’s “Ethical Perspectives on the News” and sometimes a cook at Simone’s Plain and Simple, the French restaurant in the middle of nowhere.*

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# Hott Topic

Seeing HOTT for the first time at the Mill on New Years Eve was—for me—a revelation. They put on a show that was crackling with energy, exactly what punk rock promises but rarely delivers. It was also funny, and sense of humor is not always a punk strong point. Singer Ed Nehring, whose orange jumpsuit, hearing protection, and tennis shoes (all with a matching yellow racing stripe) seemed to be a demented airport

runway worker with delusion of

their youth. They make new music that's very much of the current moment, even as it parodies of traditional rock forms.

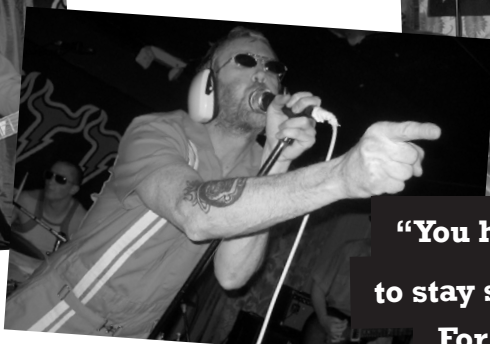
Nehring and Buddin started playing together in 1983. Buddin says, "My first band was Human Error. That band evolved over time to include Ed as the singer. A couple of years later we formed Red Throb, that was a better band."

Since then Buddin has been in several other groups, most recently Stickman, which has

playing the songs that would become part of the Hott repertoire before the birth of Nehring's son. He met bassist Eric Johnson when he moved into his neighborhood.

"We just started running into each other and talking, and realized we had this really bizarre connection," Nehring said. "He was from Fayetteville, Arkansas, and his band opened for the Iowa City band Stiff Legged Sheep.

At that point me & Kylie had been playing together messing around with these songs, so we just in-



**"You have to do something to stay sane as an adult.**

**For some people it's boats and motorcycles and cars, but those things never really interested me."**

—Kylie Buddin, Hott guitarist

being Elvis. Guitarist Kylie Buddin, bassist Eric Johnson, and drummer Jeff Keyser played together as tightly as jeans a size too small, projecting raw punk power. It was very much a show, a parody of all the broad rock gestures that date back to Jerry Lee Lewis. At the same time the passion and conviction of their performance made it much more than a cheap laugh.

As an old townie geezer, I was excited that the core of the band—Nehring and Buddin—are guys that have been around the Iowa City music scene for over 20 years. Not only that, the other bands on the bill contained Iowa City scene vets: Illinois John Fever's drummer Bob Hall and Liberty Leg's singer Ethan Richeson both passed through the legendary and notorious Iowa Beef Experience, in addition to being in many other local bands over the years. But the bands that played that night were not revival acts, or older dudes trying to recapture

been performing and recording for 12 years.

"You have to do something to stay sane as an adult," he said. "For some people it's boats and motorcycles and cars, but those things never really interested me and I get nothing out of owning things particularly. Being part of a group of guys—or women—and achieving some artistic merit of some sort is more interesting to me."

Buddin has worked at United Action For Youth 18 years, running the recording studio, and helping kids set up shows. "With kids," Buddin says, "there's just a burning urge to get it out."

The genesis of Hott goes back six years. Nehring and Buddin had started writing and

vited him over to mess around with us and we really dug what he was doing, so he kept coming over...He was doing the same thing we were doing [playing in punk bands] in a different place."

Nehring had actually taught Jeff Keyser drums when he was in junior high. When the opportunity to play shows came up, they decided Hott needed either a drummer or a singer.

"I ran across [Jeff] at the Skate Park, and I just said 'hey man, you want to sit in for drums with the band? Because I'd like to try out the vocals and see if I can still pull it off,'" Nehring said. "He was like 'sure,' and he came over and sat down behind the drums and—it was the thing that made everything work, it was the gel we needed to make everything happen. And we knew it instantly that it was.



Just as soon as he played it was like ‘yeah, yeah, yeah this is what we needed.’”

Their performance persona was dictated by the music itself.

“As we wrote songs, we started getting a better idea of what it was we were doing and probably the best approach was to do this as if we were different characters, to have fun with it, just to make it ridiculous. The lyrics defined my character, this giant ego-driven, comic book type.”

While the music of Hott cleaves closely to the traditions of punk and hardcore, some of the inspiration for Hott’s theatricality was, according to

The music of Hott reflects a more grown-up attention to detail, and the connection to rock ‘n’ roll’s eternal youth culture is more ironic and knowing than a younger band could muster. At the same time, both Buddin and Nehring are fans of the young Iowa City bands, like

**“We wink at the audience,  
and then give them  
something that makes them  
forget the wink.”**

—Ed Nehring, Hott singer



## >> E-BOOKS FROM PAGE 15

ties, they purchase those authors' older titles. Every day their e-collection grows, with a yearly budget of \$10,000 for purchasing non-fiction and fiction e-titles from Overdrive's content reserve.

The e-reader is about to be integrated into the next form of portable media devices. Soon that bitten Apple, the originator of sinful fetish devices, will introduce the iSlate. This will be the next generation of e-readers. A unified theory of all your portable media needs will be in one fancy tablet.

That will be for the early adaptors who want to shell out the big bucks for a first generation model, but it will be a sign of things to come. For now the existing models can facilitate easy e-reading.

It is important to note as the e-reader device

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technology accelerates at an alarming rate, the legal status of digital rights have slowed to a snail's pace in the courts. As far as content rights go, it is still a murky mess. It's more complicated than Thelonious Monk's right hand. Basically there is an ocean of books between the public domain titles and books written after 1994 that are in legal limbo. Not to mention the other obstacles like authors such as Sherman Alexie and J.K. Rowling who refuse to publish digitally.

For all my icky feelings about these e-readers I shared this special little moment with Kara when she was showing me the Overdrive program. She asked me what the last thing was I read. In a panic (I didn't want to admit that it was *Candy Girl* by Diablo Cody—I would hate to see her get any more attention) I came up with the second to last. “*America America*”, I blurted out.

Kara perked up in her seat. “Oh! Ethan Canin. Good.”

And then, right there in front of me, she bought the e-edition for the library. That was an amazing little moment. The e-ness felt just as permanent as paper. **lv**

*Erin E. McCuskey gets through the winter with the help of dark beer, ELO and the films of Werner Herzog.*

Nehring, “‘70s British B-grade glam that influenced the ‘70s punk movement in England. We really liked the kind of pre-punk vibe—that weird thing where you had these older rock ‘n’ roll guys writing teenage rock ‘n’ roll songs and dressed up in glitter and stuff seemed bizarre and interesting to me.”

While their presentation is obviously contrived, as Nehring says, “We wink at the audience, and then give them something that makes them forget the wink. When we get up on stage, it’s pretty darn obvious that this is going to be ridiculous fun, that this is going to be kind of stupid, that’s the point. But when we start playing we want it to rock so hard that they forget that it’s just plain stupid. They just have stupid fun.”

“I think when I was an angry young punk rocker,” Buddin says, “I just wanted to get it out. Back then it was about anger and aggression, and the thing we’re doing now, though it’s fast and aggressive like hardcore, I feel like the nature of the material is lighthearted, lyrically.”

Bear Weather, Pacific Proving Grounds, The Tanks, Lipstick Homicide, and Petit Mal.

“There’s so many good local bands,” says Buddin, “it’s hard to pick a favorite.”

In 2010, Hott plans to record an album and play more shows, but I didn’t ever sense the sort of careerist ambition for world domination that drives some younger musicians. It’s taken Hott six years to get the point of playing shows on a regular basis, so they’re in no hurry to do anything besides perfecting their songs and live show. The one thing that doesn’t seem to be a deciding factor for Hott—or indeed any of the other current bands with veteran members in Iowa City—is nostalgia. The energy of youth drives the creation of a lot of rock music, and it’s the image of youth that sells it, but it’s a mistake to think that grown-ass folks can’t rock—something Hott proves in spades. **lv**

*Kent Williams is an optimist who loves life, sport, and hates lies. He is Little Village’s arts editor.*

# Into the Blue

February is a short month, a month for groundhogs, lovers, groundhog lovers, and, this time around, music lovers as well. I'm really excited because three of the artists coming through town this month have been responsible for some of my favorite albums of the last four years, and also because the newest venue in town has two super-marquee events.

One artist who made two great albums in the last four

*St. Vincent plays the Blue Moose Taphouse (formerly The Industry).*

years is St. Vincent (born Annie Clark). 2007's *Marry Me* was set to be her breakout record, as she was literally breaking out from Sufjan Stevens' band into her own solo career. While she certainly brought along the his penchant for super-lush pop orchestration, she also shed the burden of his humorless, tiresome lyrics for more refreshing and playful

fare (a line from the title track: "We'll do what Mary and Joseph did/without the kid").



However, while that album was damn good, it wasn't until 2009's *Actor* that she achieved indie superstar status. *Actor* is a darker and

more precise affair, both in terms of musical arrangement and songwriting, however, it's also more immediately accessible. This launched it at No. 90 on the *Billboard* charts, and, importantly, garnered her a lot of famous friends.

The inevitable pairing was with fellow orchestral wordsmith Andrew Bird, whom she toured with. She also teamed up with Wisconsin heartthrob Bon Iver for "*Roslyn*,"

**It wasn't until 2009's *Actor* that St. Vincent achieved indie superstar status.**

on this year's *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* soundtrack. She plays Feb. 16th at the Blue Moose Taphouse.

That's right! The Blue Moose. Opening a new venue is a big deal around here, and three days before St. Vincent I'm guessing many folks will lay their eyes on the place for the first time at the Jenny Hoyston/William Elliott Whitmore show on Feb. 13th. Everyone from the door staff to the beer prices will be subject to the critical eye of indie music fans, and

## Picador Peril?

The little club that everyone loves to gossip about was back on blast last month, thanks to the place being currently for sale and going on hiatus for a few weeks in January. But they're open again now, so I'd like to briefly address what's become a (sadly) familiar refrain around town: "The Picador used to have good shows. Now it doesn't. Who cares if it closes?!" Well, I do. But before I get into that, keep in mind that this sidebar isn't an excuse for some of the sad events in The Picador's past (especially the firing of Doug Robeson),

or a dig on other places. It's just, you know, how I feel.

First of all, while the Picador's lack of "good" shows in recent months is certainly related to larger economic factors, it's also, frankly, an issue of taste. Other venues have indie rock shows now, but the fact that "indie" has gone "mainstream" (a point not worth belaboring, *Garden State*, etc.) is what makes those events even possible (and profitable). While on any given night we might want our rock clubs to be barometers of mainstream(-ish) taste by booking currently "hot" bands, what distinguishes clubs like The Picador is their capacity to also take risks and bring in

kinds of music not available elsewhere.

For example, if we look at perhaps the two most musically interesting and critically celebrated genres of independent music in the last five years—metal and noise—then we're forced to recognize that The Picador has booked some of the premier bands in each (Boris and Wolf Eyes come to mind). And if you don't think metal and noise were big stories in the last five years of music, then check out the decade-end coverage from publications ranging from *Pitchfork* to *The New Yorker*. Whether or not it's your cup of tea (or plastic cup of Beam), the Picador is still the best venue at keeping it weird, to borrow a motto from Austin, Texas. And we all benefit from that.

For more thoughts on the issue, check out *LittleVillageMag.com*.



I, for one, hope that the Blue Moose will not wither under the pressure.

Anyway, the whole point of shows is the



That's right! The Blue Moose. Opening a new venue is a big deal around here, and I'm guessing many folks will lay their eyes on the place for the first time at the Jenny Hoyston/William Elliott Whitmore show.

music (right?) and these two former roommates collaborated for an absolute gem of an album with 2006's *Hallways of Always*. While Hoyston is perhaps most famous for being the vocalist of no-wave band Erase Errata, and Whitmore is best known for barking banjo songs, this collaboration makes more sense in light of Hoyston's Paradise Island and self-titled material. (If you can manage to track

down her cover of Buffy Sainte-Marie's "The Dream Tree," it's so worth it.) This show will feature a set from each player individually and then the first-ever performance

*Philadelphia's Dr. Dog drops by The Mill.*

of *Hallways of Always*, in its entirety, with the two of them (although "Black Iowa Dirt" has been a live Whitmore staple for some time).

Lastly, on Feb. 1st at The Picador the incredibly underappreciated Mountains come through town, in

support of their toweringly awesome 2009 record, *Choral*. With two songs crossing the 12-minute mark, this is classic, epic, textured, ambient dronescapes, done melodically, rhythmically and beautifully. That's a lot of descriptors there, but this music actually has as much in common with circa 2006 Nathan Fake as it does with Eno. It's pulsing and sleepy and just plain great.

And, hey! Dr. Dog is playing the Mill on Feb. 6th and Justin Townes Earle (Steve's kid) is there on the 23rd. **lv**

*Craig Eley is a music writer, promoter and American studies grad student, usually in that order. Got news on the music scene? Write to him at [craig@missionfreak.com](mailto:craig@missionfreak.com).*

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## Ghostbustaz

*Land of the Dead*

Public School Records

[myspace.com/theghostbustaz](http://myspace.com/theghostbustaz)

The debut release, *Land of the Dead*, from hip hop duo Ghostbustaz (Coolzey and Def3) feels like a time capsule from before we built up this millennium's thick armor of cynicism. Said armor can only be cracked by flagrant shock-and-awe tactics, which the duo deploys without shame.

**The title track comes drenched in fake blood.**

These eight tracks are steeped in rock-steady beats and rhymes more obsessed with a fresh pair of kicks instead of whips (ghostridden or not) and rims.

The title track comes drenched in fake blood from George Romero's prop department. "Land of the Dead" starts off sounding like a classic yo' mamma track but instead of ripping on the woman who gave you life, Coolzey and Def3 trade horror movie in-jokes ("You can never *exorcise* like Emily Rose") over a chilling, minimal synth strings.

"Girls Girls Girls" comes off like a grown-ass version of The Beastie Boys' "Girls." Instead of childish come-ons over tinkly, toy piano lines, the Ghostbustaz have a better idea of what they want: "a brown-eyed brunette with nice breasts/who keep a couple decent, dark beers in her ice chest." The duo spits pick ups and dismissals over a taut guitar and organ stomp capped off with an old-soul guitar fill between each verse. Def3's claims that, while some of this may be offensive to the titular subjects of the song, "don't take it so personal, it's just rap." And that's a key point—these are party jams that are actually fun, not chest-

beaters about conspicuous consumption and drunken anonymous sex.

Ghostbustaz aren't entirely infatuated with the old school. "Keep it Low, Bro," finds Def3 getting pretty close to Ludacris' buttery, start-stop-then-hold-it-out flow over a beat of deep pulses and eerie synth flutters that wouldn't sound too out of place riding alongside a chopped and screwed masterpiece.

*John Schlotfelt is the most optimistic cynic he knows.*



## Samuel Locke-Ward

*Where the Sick Go To Die:*  
*Nonstop Rawk + Rawl*  
*Jukebox Vol. 17*

Unread Records

[myspace.com/samuellockeward](http://myspace.com/samuellockeward)

The prolific and downright unrelenting Samuel Locke-Ward comes at us again with the follow up to a record that hasn't even come out yet (due to difficulties at the pressing factory). *Where the Sick Go To Die: Nonstop Rawk + Rawl Jukebox Vol. 17* is 18 tracks and 46 minutes of the lo-est-fi trash you've ever heard, and that's meant as a compliment.

The album opener, "Do It Wrong" and "Lippy (I Don't Want to Be)" are certified slacker anthems. "Do It Wrong" is sloppy and shambling, as though the guitars are about slip out of tune or break at any moment, and Sam bursts a blood vessel or two belting out the song's title. The only thing holding the whole exuberant middle finger of a song together is his wife, Grace's meticulous drumming. "Lippy" is less chaotic musically, but a more pointed piece of snark: "I don't wanna be lippy / just do as I'm told / yes sir, yes sir, I know." The tune stomps along to a simple marching beat with thin, tiny synthesizer line meekly winding itself up and down the scale.

*Where the Sick Go to Die* is easily one of Locke-Ward's most consistent releases, it certainly features one of the most miraculous stretches of songs he's ever strung together. From the dizzy, glitchy, bizarrely positive "Making Lemonade" through the nearly bucolic "Greener Gaze," Locke-Ward packs more sarcasm and animated frenzy into five songs than most could cram into a career. This immaculate run includes the early rock waltz of "May I Lead You Astray." Sam's whispered delivery sounds incredibly creepy, yet the slimy slide guitar and the choral-themed prom sound of the instrumentation bring a saccharine sort of sweetness to the song.

That sort of juxtaposition is one of Locke-Ward's greatest tools; it's what makes him seem so eminently listenable and so infuriatingly alienating. He's perfected it for *Where the Sick Go to Die: Nonstop Rawk + Rawl Jukebox Vol. 17*.

*John Schlotfelt*



## Lwa

*Various Live/Trainees*

[www.myspace.com/lwaawl](http://www.myspace.com/lwaawl)

Chris Wiersma & Matt Schettler of Lwa have blazed a unique path through the Iowa City music scene. Even though they both work at the Picador—Iowa City's Ground Zero of Rawk—neither seem interested in playing rock music. When they use conventional instruments, they don't use them conventionally. What they do, mostly, is use a bunch of cheap gear to make noise. This isn't actually an uncommon pastime anymore; there is a worldwide noise underground, devoted to making music similar to Lwa. It's fun to make a racket, freed from bourgeois concerns like melody, rhythm, and hearing damage. But through years of practice—a lot of it done in front of audiences, while bellowing drunk



and shirtless—a funny thing happened with Lwa. They have become really good at it.

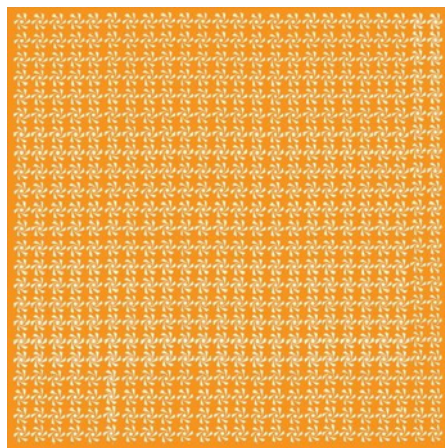
So what is it they do? Well there are drones involved—long sustained tones. There's distortion, though at a certain point it's hard to distinguish between sounds that started out messed up and those that were distorted intentionally with effect pedals or abused, overloaded mixers. There are vague sounds of uncertain provenance that fade in and out. There's the mighty Beltone Hearing Tester, capable of bowel-loosening rumbles and mosquito whines. There are times in their performances which most closely resemble what you'd hear in a factory full of broken machines collapsing into itself. Occasionally (as on the last track of *Various Live*) there are guest musicians on brass and reed instruments.

What Lwa does that sets them apart from many in the noise scene is that they listen deeply as they create their sound. They've been plonking, buzzing, shrieking, and droning long enough that they've developed a refined aesthetic of how it should sound. With

the usual musical constraints removed, the easiest thing to do is to be arbitrary and aimless. But Lwa are never like that. Every time I've seen them perform, it has been different, in mood, intention and meaning. These recordings, some of them of live performances, are representative snapshots of Lwa, but they're by no means finished products like a pop song. No one's going to yell out at a Lwa show 'play track three from the one with the flowers on the sleeve!' With Lwa you never step in the same river twice.

Having these CDs seems almost a betrayal of the primal Lwa experience, which is to stand in a dark room, watch them hunched over their rat's nest of gear as waves of fractally roiling sound wash over you. The CDs hide a different pleasure, which is to hear them repeatedly and discover their internal logic, and accidental, contingent beauty.

*Kent Williams is an optimist who loves life, sport, and hates lies. He is Little Village's arts editor.*



## Mountains

### Choral

Thrill Jockey

[myspace.com/apestaartjemountains](http://myspace.com/apestaartjemountains)

Mountains recorded its third release, *Choral*, in front of a live audience with minimal overdubs added later for effect or layering. And despite the trappings of their genre (ambient), the record *feels* live, not stately. The Brooklyn-based duo pays attention to the listener, quietly adding elements like a fog descending in the early morning.

The long, horizontal hum of the title track opens up the show. Brendon Anderegg and Koen Holtkamp introduce blips and muted swells of feedback and three minutes in the first masterstroke of *Choral* peeks through:

Something like a tenor singing through bad connections tries breaking through the electronic veneer. The "voice" grows, then the one note attempts to become a melodic line before getting looped back onto itself ad nauseum. Mountains even dares to taunt you with the illusion of rhythm. A deep, round bass thud occurs fairly periodically, but it doesn't propel the song, it floats along with it. "Choral" finally tapers off with a gauzey guitar line.

"Telescope" begins with the steady cycle of acoustic strums, like a coffee house troubadour's next lament, as small blooms of a synthesized flute and the ominous bubbling of a phase-shifted electronic whir. And as quietly as the different elements entered, the guitar has faded away and billowing heaps of hisses float over top slow pulses, and, finally we're left with a field recording of rainfall.

On the following track, "Add Infinity," Anderegg and Holtkamp trade acoustic and electric guitar lines over a thin, simmering film of synthesizer buzz, alternating between droning feedback and disjointed, finger-plucked lines. The track, while pleasant, approaches cliché; it sounds like a mash up of b-sides from Brian Eno and Fennesz, before finally adding the playful blooping of vibes a little shy of the eight-minute mark and ending on an up note a minute-and-a-half later.

Mountains will be sculpting sound with TAPE and Marlow Eggplant at The Picador on Monday, February 1.

*John Schlotfeld*



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## ART/EXHIBITS

### African American Historical Museum and Cultural Center of Iowa

55 12th Ave SE, Cedar Rapids

[www.blackiowa.org](http://www.blackiowa.org)

Dear Mr. President, Feb. 15 • The 20th Century African American Experience, Feb. 16, 6pm • No Roads Lead to Buxton, ongoing

### AKAR

257 E. Iowa Ave. Iowa City

[www.akardesign.com](http://www.akardesign.com)

Shoko Teruyama, opens Feb. 19

### Brucemore

2160 Linden Drive SE, Cedar Rapids

[www.brucemore.org](http://www.brucemore.org)

Growing Appreciation Program: Framing Landscape, Feb. 27, 10:30am

### Cedar Rapids Museum of Art

410 Third Ave. SE, Cedar Rapids

[www.crma.org](http://www.crma.org)

*Grant Wood Studio and Visitor Center; Guided tours of Grant Wood's home and studio, Saturdays & Sundays, hourly 12-4pm*

Creative Connections: Artists in Action with Linda Goodall, Feb. 6, 10:30am • Drawn to Drawing, ongoing • Less is More, ongoing • Norman Rockwell: Fact & Fiction, ongoing • Malvina Hoffman, ongoing • Mauricio Lasansky, ongoing • Art in Roman Life, ongoing • Grant Wood: In Focus, ongoing

### The Chait Galleries Downtown

218 E Washington St., Iowa City

[www.thegalleriesdowntown.com](http://www.thegalleriesdowntown.com)

Abstract Paintings, thru Feb. 26

### CSPS/Legion Arts

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

[www.legionarts.org](http://www.legionarts.org)

Translations, ongoing

### Faulconer Gallery

Grinnell College, 1108 Park St., Grinnell

[www.grinnell.edu/fulconergallery](http://www.grinnell.edu/fulconergallery)

Repeat, Reveal, React: Identities in Flux, opens Jan. 29 • Influence: Faculty Selections from College Collections, opens Jan. 29

### Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum West Branch

[www.nps.gov/heho](http://www.nps.gov/heho)

Patterns of the Past: A Century of American Quilting, 1840-1940, Jan. 23 - Mar. 21 • Iowa A to Z, ongoing

### Hudson River Gallery

538 South Gilbert St., Iowa City

[www.hudsonrivergallery.com](http://www.hudsonrivergallery.com)

Photography, Terry Riley, thru Feb. 27

### Iowa Artisans Gallery

207 E. Washington, Iowa City

[www.iowa-artisans-gallery.com](http://www.iowa-artisans-gallery.com)

Contemporary Bookwork, a Juried Members' Show, thru Feb. 15 • We Love Russell: Fundraising Exhibit for Russell Karkowski, opens, Jan. 27

### Johnson County Historical Society

310 5th St., Coralville

[www.jchsiowa.org](http://www.jchsiowa.org)

Victorian Valentine Workshop, Saturday, Feb. 6, 2pm • With Much Love, Feb. 11, 1pm • A Century of Adventure, 100 Years of Scouting, ongoing

### Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

[www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap](http://www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap)

WorldCanvass, India, Feb. 12, 5-7pm • The Museum Goes to the Fair, thru Feb. 21

### Revival

117 E College St, Iowa City

[www.revivaliowacity.com](http://www.revivaliowacity.com)

Dawn Frary photography, opens Jan. 26

### University Museum of Art

[www.uiowa.edu/uima](http://www.uiowa.edu/uima)

Check website for locations

UIMA@IMU, ongoing

### White Rabbit

109 S. Linn St., Iowa City

[www.whiterabbitgallery.com](http://www.whiterabbitgallery.com)

New Relics from the Bottomland, thru Feb.

## MUSIC

### Blue Moose Tap House

211 Iowa Ave, Iowa City

[www.bluemooseic.com](http://www.bluemooseic.com)

Jake Dilley And The Color Pharmacy w/ tba, Feb. 5, 9pm • Liberty Leg, Feb. 6, 9pm • Shame Train, Feb. 12, 9pm • William Elliot Whitmore w. Jenny Hoyston, Feb. 13, 8pm • St. Vincent w. Wild Birds and Peace Drums, Feb. 16, 6pm • Breathe Carolina/Hyper Crush w/ Special guests, Feb. 23, 5pm

### CSPS

1103 Third St SE, Cedar Rapids

[www.legionarts.org](http://www.legionarts.org)

Ben Schmidt, Feb. 6, 8pm • Vance Gilbert, Feb. 12, 8pm • Buckwheat Zydeco, Feb. 17, 8pm • Carrie Newcomer, Feb. 19, 8pm • Songwriting workshop with Carrie Newcomer, Feb. 20, time TBA • Catie Curtis, Feb. 25, 8pm • The Red Stick Ramblers, Feb. 28, 7pm • Fred Eaglesmith with The Ginn Sisters, Mar. 3, 8pm

### Dawn's Hide & Bead Away

220 E. Washington St., Iowa City

[www.dawnsbeads.com](http://www.dawnsbeads.com)

Dawn's Coffeshop: Greg and Jean Thompson, Feb. 5, 5pm

### Englert

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

[www.englert.org](http://www.englert.org)

Dark Star Orchestra, Feb. 8, 7pm • Rosanne Cash, Feb. 10, 7:30pm

### Hancher Auditorium

[www.hancher.uiowa.edu](http://www.hancher.uiowa.edu)

See website for temporary locations

Rosanne Cash, Feb. 10, 7:30pm • Winard Harper Sextet, Feb. 12, 7:30pm • YL Male Voice Choir, Feb. 21, 2pm

### The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City

[www.icmill.com](http://www.icmill.com)

Shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted

*Study Hall, the game, Sundays, 9pm-Midnight*

*Open Mic with J. Knight, Mondays, 8pm, call 338-6713 to sign up*

Tuesday Night Social Club, Tuesdays • Adobanga w. All Rattle & Dust, Sarah Cram & the Derelicts, Jan. 30, 9pm • TUESDAY NIGHT SOCIAL CLUB w. Vagabonds, Dewi Sant, Vincent Peiffer, Feb. 2, 9pm • Caleb Hawley w. Reed Waddle, Feb. 3, 9pm • Brooks Strause & The Gory Details w. Dustin Smith/ Eric Whittaker, Feb. 4, 9pm • Dave Moore, Feb. 5, 8pm • DR. DOG w. the Growlers, Feb. 6, 9pm • TUESDAY NIGHT SOCIAL CLUB w. Grand Tetons, Anna Vogelzang, Annie Palmer, Feb. 9, 9pm • Burlington St. Bluegrass Band, Feb. 10, 7pm • Jam Session w. Winard Harper Sextet, Feb. 11, 8pm • Damon Dotson, Feb. 12, 9pm • Ha Ha Tonka w. So Much Fun, Feb. 13, 9pm • TUESDAY NIGHT SOCIAL CLUB w. Skye Carrasco, Ami Saraiya, Feb. 16, 9pm • Chicago Underground Duo w. Koplant No, Feb. 18, 9pm • Brighton, MA w. Bright Giant, The Teddy Boys, Feb. 19, 9pm • Benefit for Russell Karkowski feat. The Recliners & Acoustic Mayhem, Feb. 20, 7pm • Awful Purdiesm Benefit for Pat's Learning Adventure, Feb. 21, 5pm • Justin Townes Earle w. Joe Pug, Feb. 23, 8pm • University of Iowa Jazz Performance, Feb. 25, 8pm • Orquesta Alto Maiz aka The Salsa Band, Feb. 26, 9pm • Death Ships w. Datagun, Olivia Rose Muzzy, Vagabonds, Feb. 27, 9pm

### Old Brick

26 E. Market St., Iowa City

[www.straphaelorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.straphaelorthodoxchurch.org)

Grinnell Singers, Rachmaninov's Vespers, Feb. 11

### Old Capitol Museum

Pentacrest, Iowa City

[www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap](http://www.uiowa.edu/~oldcap)

Piano Sundays: Uriel Tsachor and Ksenia Nosikova, Feb. 7, 1:30pm

### Orchestra Iowa

[www.orchestraiowa.org](http://www.orchestraiowa.org)

Check website for locations

Cupid's Arrow, Sinclair Auditorium, Feb. 13, 8pm • Cupid's Arrow, West High School, Feb. 14, 2pm • From the Top, Englert Theatre, Feb. 24, 7:30pm • Czech Mates, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Feb. 27, 7pm



Ben Schmidt

## Ben Schmidt

**Silt CD Release**

**CSPS**

**1103 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids**

**Saturday, Feb. 6, 8pm**

**[www.legionarts.org](http://www.legionarts.org)**

There are enough obviously stellar Iowa City shows this month (St. Vincent, William Elliot Whitmore, etc.) that we don't even need to promote them. Instead, if you have learned to operate a motor vehicle, let us encourage you to attend Iowa City resident Ben Schmidt's performance at Cedar Rapids' CSPS on Saturday, February 6.

Mr. Schmidt, like many local musical heroes, draws heavily from folk traditions and good ol' Mississippi delta blues. *No Depression's* Jim Musser says that in Mr. Schmidt's tunes, "You'll hear elements of John Gorka, Jesse Winchester, Kelly Joe Phelps and, on the slipped-rhythm fun-house 'Dance That Dance,' doses of Tom Waits and Leonard Cohen." That's a lot of talent rolled into one guy. And chances are that if you're into this sort of thing around here, you already know the quality of the product.

Mr. Schmidt commutes to Cedar Rapids as the artist in residence at the Johnson Elementary School of the Art, which really is a neat school. And his next album, *Silt*, "is an exploration of arrangement and musical texture as the backdrop for lyrics based in a post-flood landscape," according to a CSPS press release. All of this is heavily local stuff that we can't recommend enough.

The show starts at 8 p.m. and is opened by Dustin Busch, a guitarist who will also accompany Mr. Schmidt during his set. CSPS is located at 1103 Third St SE and isn't that bad of a drive. Tickets are \$11 in advance and \$15 at the door.

## The Picador

**330 E. Washington St., Iowa City**

**[www.thepicador.com](http://www.thepicador.com)**

*All shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted*

Raise the Red Lantern, Jan. 30, 9pm • Mountains with Tape and Mario Eggplant, Feb. 1, 9pm • Velvet Davenport w. Viking Fuck, Florida, Parade in the Old Country Sky, Feb. 18, 9pm • Liferuiner w. No Wings to Speak of, Reaping Asmodeia, When Forever Ends, The Challenge, Faces Turned Ashen, Revive the Fallen, Of Flesh Unseen, Feb. 25, 5pm

## Public Space One

**129 E. Washington St., Iowa City**

**[www.myspace.com/publicspaceone](http://www.myspace.com/publicspaceone)**

Lipstick Homicide, Plane Crashes and Slow Dancing, Feb. 5, 9pm • Lookbook, Feb. 26, 9pm

## Riverside Casino

**3184 Highway 22, Riverside**

**[www.riversidecasinoandresort.com](http://www.riversidecasinoandresort.com)**

Kris Kristofferson, Feb. 12, 8pm • Valli to Valli: A Tribute to the Jersey Boys, Feb. 28, 4pm

## University of Iowa Music

**[www.uiowa.edu/~music](http://www.uiowa.edu/~music)**

**See website for locations**

La Finta Giardiniera, opera, Jan. 29-30, 8pm, Jan. 31, 2pm • Complete Piano Ballades and Scherzos by Chopin, Feb. 11, 7:30pm • Winard Harper Sextet, Feb. 12, 7:30pm • Maia Quartet, Feb. 13, 7:30pm • Center for New Music Ensemble, Feb. 14, 7:30pm • Symphony Orchestra, Feb. 17, 7:30pm • Wolfgang David, violin; Wolfgang Panhofer, cello; David Gompper, piano, Feb. 21, 2pm • Christine Rutledge, baroque viola, Feb. 28, 7:30pm • All-Chopin Recital, in Celebration of His 200th Birthday, Mar. 1, 7:30pm

## White Lightning Warehouse

**[www.myspace.com/whitelightingic](http://www.myspace.com/whitelightingic)**

Mondo Drag, Alex Body, Centaur Noir, Cocoon, Feb. 6, 9pm • Burger Kingdom, The Tanks, Feb. 14, 9pm • Antilles, Lord Green, Suicide Ritual, Void Gang, Feb. 20, 9pm

# Bored?

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## Yacht Club

13 S. Linn St., Iowa City

[www.iowacityyachtclub.org](http://www.iowacityyachtclub.org)

*Shows at 9pm unless otherwise noted*

\* 5 in a Hand + Oh! Kuso + Sean Shiel, Jan. 30, 9pm • Robert John Band + Collectible Boys, Feb. 4, 9pm • 7th Annual Bob Marley Birthday Bash with Natty Nation, Feb. 5, 9pm • Dennis McMurrin & The Demolition Band's 75th Show!, Feb. 6, 9pm • Pert Near Sandstone + Smokin' Joe Scarpalino, Feb. 11, 9pm • White Water Ramble, Feb. 12, 9pm • 5th Annual Sublime Tribute/Bradley Nowell's Birthday Party, Feb. 13, 9pm • Euforquestra - early and late sets + Cymatic, Feb. 18, 9pm • Split Lip Rayfield + Mad Monks, Feb. 19, 9pm • David Zollo and the Body Electric, Feb. 20, 9pm • Trampled By Turtles + The Boomchucks, Feb. 26, 9pm • Big Funk Guarantee + Amanda Miller and the Smoking Sextion, Feb. 27, 9pm

## THEATER/DANCE/PERFORMANCE

### Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

[www.englert.org](http://www.englert.org)

Second City 50th Anniversary, Feb. 5 & 6, 8pm • Peking Acrobats, Feb. 13, 2 & 7pm • Wonderful Town, Feb. 18-21 • Ralphie May, Feb. 25, 7:30pm

### The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City

[www.icmill.com](http://www.icmill.com)

Dreamwell Theatre's Down With Love, Feb. 14, 7:30pm • The Vagina Monologues, Feb. 27, 6pm

### No Shame Theatre

Theatre B, UI Theatre Building

[www.noshame.org](http://www.noshame.org)

Fridays in February, 11pm

### Penguin's Comedy Club

Clarion Hotel, 525 33rd Ave. SW, Cedar Rapids

[www.penguinscomedyclub.com](http://www.penguinscomedyclub.com)

*Check website for showtimes*

BT and Todd Andrews, Jan. 29-30 • Heywood Banks, Feb. 5-6 • Mark Sweeney, Feb. 12-13 • Jennifer Coolidge, Feb. 18 • Rocky Laporte, Feb. 19-20 • Mike Merryfield, Feb. 26-27

### Riverside Theatre

213 N. Gilbert St., Iowa City

[www.riversidetheatre.org](http://www.riversidetheatre.org)

*Check website for showtimes*

End Days, Jan. 29-Feb. 21

### Riverside Casino

3184 Highway 22, Riverside

[www.riversidecasinoandresort.com](http://www.riversidecasinoandresort.com)

Jason Latimer, Jan. 31, 4pm

## Summit Restaurant Comedy Night

10 S. Clinton St., Iowa City

[www.theSummitrestaurantandbar.com](http://www.theSummitrestaurantandbar.com)

*Shows start at 9:30pm*

BT and Gretchen Hess, Feb. 3 • The Sandman, Feb. 10 • Claude Stewart, John Burton, Feb. 17 • JJ Boyd, Jason Marcus, Feb. 24

### Theatre Cedar Rapids

4444 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids

[www.theatreccr.org](http://www.theatreccr.org)

The Producers, opens Feb. 26 • Grand Reopening of the Iowa Theater Building, Feb. 26, 6pm

### The University of Iowa Dance

Space/Place Theatre, North Hall

[www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa](http://www.uiowa.edu/artsiowa)

Faculty / Graduate Dance Concert, Feb. 18-20, 8pm

### The University of Iowa Theatre

Main Theatre Building, UI Campus

[www.uiowa.edu/~theatre](http://www.uiowa.edu/~theatre)

*Check website for showtimes*

Eye Piece, Feb. 5-14 • Ten-Minute Play Festival, Feb. 11-13, 8pm • Our Golden Years, Feb. 18-20, 8pm • A Dry Cycle of Years, Feb. 25-27, 8pm

### U.S. Cellular Center

370 1st Ave NE, Cedar Rapids

[www.uscellularcenter.com](http://www.uscellularcenter.com)

Jeff Dunham, Feb. 25, 7:30pm

## WORDS

### The Mill

120 E. Burlington St., Iowa City

[www.icmill.com](http://www.icmill.com)

Talk Art - Writers' Workshop, Feb. 10 & 24, 9pm

### Prairie Lights

15 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City

[www.prairielightsbooks.com](http://www.prairielightsbooks.com)

*All "Live from Prairie Lights" readings at 7pm unless noted*

Jerals Walker, Feb. 1 • Joshua Ferris, Feb. 2 • Nick Pace, Feb. 5 • Ellen Lewis, Feb. 9 • John D'Agata, Feb. 10 • Lucy Silag, Feb. 11 • Wells Tower, Feb. 12 • Jeffrey Copeland, Feb. 16 • Karen Anderson & Jerry Gabriel, Feb. 18 • Geoff Becker, Feb. 18 • Matthew Davis, Feb. 24 • Kevin Gonzalez & Nick Lantz, Feb. 25

### University of Iowa Museum of Natural History

Macbride Hall, UI Campus

[www.uiowa.edu/~nathist](http://www.uiowa.edu/~nathist)

Christopher Brochu, Feb. 18, 7pm

### UI School of Art

Studio Arts, 1375 Hwy 1 West

[www.art.uiowa.edu](http://www.art.uiowa.edu)

*Check website for galleries and hours*

James Sienna lecture, Feb. 11, 7:30pm

## CINEMA

### Alexis Park Inn

1165 S. Riverside Drive, Iowa City

[www.alexisparkinn.com](http://www.alexisparkinn.com)

Aviaton Movie Night, Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23, 6:30pm

### Bijou Theatre

IMU, UI Campus, Iowa City

[www.uiowa.edu/~bijou/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~bijou/)

Good Hair, Women in Trouble, Jan. 29-Feb. 4 • Coco Before Chanel, Brief Interviews with Hideous Men, Feb. 5-11 • The House of the Devil, Winds of Desire, Feb. 12-18 • 3D Porn: Disco Dolls in Hot Skin, Feb. 12-13 • Oscar Shorts Programs: Animation and Live Action, Feb. 19-25 • Elect the Dead Symphony, Feb. 21 • Uncertainty, After School, Feb. 26-Mar. 4

### Englert Theatre

221 E. Washington St., Iowa City

[www.englert.org](http://www.englert.org)

Moulin Rouge, Feb. 21, 9pm

### University of Iowa Museum of Natural History

Macbride Hall, UI Campus

[www.uiowa.edu/~nathist](http://www.uiowa.edu/~nathist)

Darwin's Dangerous Idea, Feb. 7, 2pm • Great Transformations, Feb. 14, 2pm • Extinction!, Feb. 21, 2pm • The Mind's Big Bang, Feb. 28, 2pm

## KIDS

### Iowa City Public Library

123 South Linn St. Iowa City

[www.icpl.org](http://www.icpl.org)

Storytime at 10:30 Mon-Sat, 2pm Sun

### University of Iowa Museum of Natural History

Macbride Hall, UI Campus

[www.uiowa.edu/~nathist](http://www.uiowa.edu/~nathist)

Storytime Explorers: Backyard Birds, Feb. 21, 2pm

## MISC

### Critical Hit Games

89 Second St, Coralville

[www.criticalhitgames.net](http://www.criticalhitgames.net)

Board Game Night, Feb. 3, 10, 17, 24

### Johnson County Historical Society

310 5th St., Coralville

[www.jchsiowa.org](http://www.jchsiowa.org)

3rd Annual Coralville WinterFest, Jan. 31, 1-4pm at the Coralville River Landing

### PATV

206 Lafayette St., Iowa City

[www.patv.tv](http://www.patv.tv)

*The Smartest Iowan game show Wednesdays, contestants needed, email smartestiowan@gmail.com*



### Curses, Foiled Again

- After robbers used heavy metal drain covers to smash their way into a Welsh bank in Cardiff and make off with \$171,156, police quickly identified the culprits because a witness remembered the personalized license plate—"J4MES"—on the sporty blue BMW used as the getaway vehicle. Police found James Snell, 27, and his brother Wayne, 34, holding more than \$48,944 of the loot and rounded up the rest of the gang. "It was the distinctiveness of the car which contributed to the robbers' undoing," prosecutor Daniel Williams said. (*The Daily Telegraph*)
- After receiving a report of a City Transfer truck broken down outside Renton, Wash., state police arrived to find a 19-year-old Tacoma man claiming the truck had run out of gas. At the same time, a City Transfer worker reported spotting the stalled vehicle, saying it had been stolen from City Transfer yard in Sumner. Shortly after police arrived, a City Transfer worker who witnessed the theft arrived and identified the 19-year-old as the thief. After the suspect's arrest, Trooper Dan McDonald said the truck hadn't run out of gas; the suspect had filled it with unleaded gas instead of diesel fuel. (*Associated Press*)

### Procurement Follies

Cities that installed energy-efficient traffic lights are discovering the new LED bulbs don't burn hot enough to melt snow and can become crusted over in a storm, leading to accidents. As a result, crews are being dispatched after storms to clean off the snow by hand. "It's a bit labor-intensive," said Green Bay, Wis., police Lt. Jim Runge. (*Associated Press*)

### Elbow Room

The Wanxiang-Tiancheng shopping center in Shijiazhuang, China, opened a parking garage with extra-wide spaces to accommodate women drivers. The bays are 3 feet wider than normal and painted pink and purple. In addition, the shopping center hired female attendants to guide women into their spaces. "The added space helps us to park safely," a driver identified only as Miss Zhang told the Hebei Youth Daily newspaper. "I think it shows respect for women." (*Agence France-Presse*)

### On the Cutting Edge

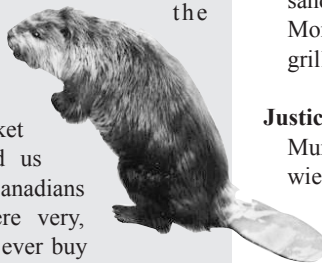
- Police in Beloit, Wis., said that when Yvone Coleman, 31, became suspicious of text messages from other women to boyfriend Lester Burks, 33, she confronted him with a knife. Burks responded by attacking her

with a sword. Coleman required six stitches on her forearm. (*Beloit Daily News*)

- After police arrested Jared Weston Walter, 22, for snipping off the hair of a woman sitting in front of him on a bus outside Portland, Ore., they identified him as the "TriMet barber," who prosecutor Chuck French blamed for "a number of incidents" in which women have either had their hair cut with scissors or "superglued" on TriMet buses. (*The Oregonian*)

### Cunning Move

Canada's second-oldest magazine is changing its name because its unintended sexual connotation has caused the history journal to run afoul of Internet filters and turned off potential readers. The Beaver, founded in 1920 as a publication of the Hudson's Bay Company, will become Canada's History with the April issue, editor-in-chief Mark Reid announced. "Market research showed us that younger Canadians and women were very, very unlikely to ever buy a magazine called The Beaver, no matter what's about," Reid said.



### Patriotic Duty

Champion hurdler Jana Rawlinson had her breast implants removed to better her chances of winning a medal for Australia at the 2012 Olympics. Rawlinson told Woman's Day magazine she "loved having bigger boobs" but didn't want to "short-change Australia." (*Agence France-Presse*)

### When the Heimlich Maneuver Fails

While handcuffing assault suspect Andrew Grande, 23, sheriff's deputies in Bay County, Fla., said they observed him swallowing what turned out to be a "large bag of marijuana." When deputies ordered him to "spit it out," he continued to resist. Deputies tased him, whereupon he fell to the ground and choked to death, sheriff's officials concluded, on the marijuana. (*Panama City News Herald*)

### Where's Waldo?

Five years after Mark Weinberger, 46, fled from justice, authorities found him living in a tent high up in the Italian Alps, surviving

on dried and canned food and snow he melted on a portable stove. Sought by U.S. law enforcement for performing unnecessary surgery to defraud insurance companies, Weinberger ran a clinic in Merrillville, Ind., and earned, according to his abandoned wife, Michelle, \$200,000 a week before he wound up on the FBI's most-wanted list. He had been sighted as far away as China before two Carabinieri officers located him atop Mount Blanc. After his capture, Weinberger asked to use the lavatory, where he pulled a hidden knife and cut his throat. Despite being an expert surgeon and an ear, nose and throat specialist, he missed the artery he appeared to be aiming for and was treated for a minor wound. (*New York's Daily News*)

### Marketing Partners

Melt Bar & Grilled in Lakewood, Ohio, began offering 25 percent off to customers who show a tattoo of a grilled cheese sandwich. Meanwhile, neighboring Voodoo Monkey Tattoo is offering discounts on its grilled cheese designs. (*WJW-TV*)

### Justice Just Isn't

Munir Hussain, 53, fought off three knife-wielding intruders who broke into his home and threatened him, his wife and children, then chased them down the street in Buckinghamshire, England, joined by his brother. They managed to bring down one of the fleeing men, Walid Salem, and conked him on the head with a cricket bat. Salem, who has 50 previous convictions, received a two-year supervision order, but Munir Hussain was sentenced to 30 months in prison, and his brother, Tokeer Hussain, got 39 months, both for using "excessive force." (*The Independent*)

### The Nose Knows

Rather than stimulating the appetite, aroma may be the key to controlling it, according to scientists at an independent food-research firm in the Netherlands, who say they've found a way to enhance the familiar smells in food enough to activate areas of the brain that perceive stomach fullness. "It's all about flavor release," lead researcher Rianne Ruijschop explained, "without adding anything artificial." (*The Washington Times*)

Compiled from the nation's press by Roland Sweet. Submit items, citing date and source, to P.O. Box 8130, Alexandria VA 22306.

# I'm on a deserted island. How can I tell which plants are poisonous?

*Quick scenario: deserted island, colorful fruits and vegetation. How do I know what I should eat and what I should feed to my mother-in-law? Is there any way to differentiate between poisonous fruits and nonpoisonous ones?*

—Jermain

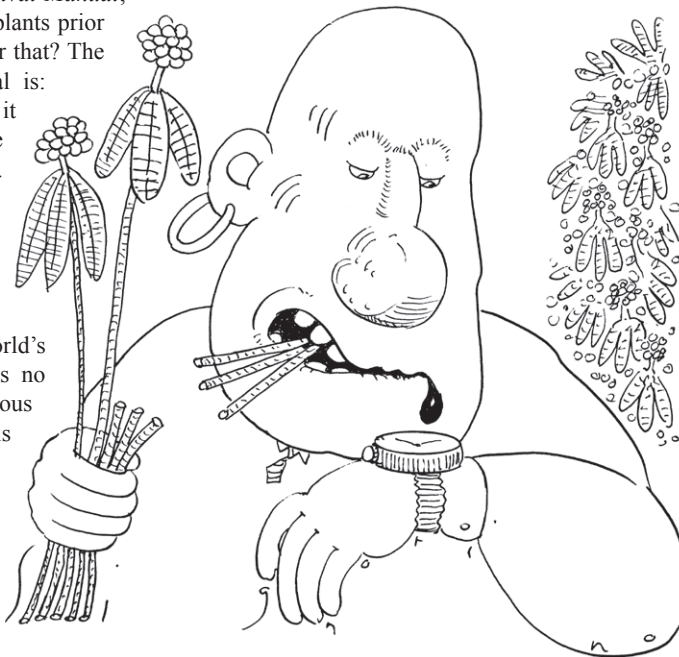
The traditional method, which admittedly works better on a group-project basis, is to try some. If you throw up, get convulsions, or die, it's poisonous. The scientific method, as explained in the *U.S. Army Survival Manual*, is to memorize the local edible plants prior to getting marooned. Too late for that? The implicit message of the manual is: soldier, you're hosed. However, it does offer a plan B, namely the 13-step Universal Edibility Test. This boils down to cautiously trying whatever potential edible you have a lot of and seeing if you throw up, get convulsions, or die.

That may not seem like the world's most helpful advice, but there's no foolproof way of avoiding poisonous plants. The best you can do is avoid high-risk items while keeping your fingers crossed about everything else. That said, while I don't claim to be a survival expert, I think we can expand a bit on the sketchy advice in the army manual. Herewith some tips.

1. First see if you can find fresh water, meat, or fish. Without water you're doomed. Fish or meat, if you can get it, is higher on the food chain than plants and provides a better nutritional mix.
2. Don't eat mushrooms or fungi. They're not all lethal, obviously, but when they're bad, they're really bad. For example, as we've discussed in the past, consumption of *Amanita phalloides* may result in nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cramping, kidney and/or liver failure, coma, and death. The thing is, this mushroom doesn't say *Amanita phalloides* on it. It looks like a mushroom. How likely are you to encounter one? I have no idea; you didn't specify where your deserted island was. If you do know

where it is, why are you writing me? Do like the army says, and memorize those edible plants.

3. Skip anything that smells like almonds. Cyanide.
4. Don't eat anything that's rotten, mildewed, growing in stagnant water, or otherwise disgusting. You'd think this would go without saying, but all the survival guides make a point of mentioning it, so I figure so should I.



5. Boil it, if you've got the means. The army disparages this practice, saying boiling doesn't destroy all toxins. Maybe not, but it'll destroy *some* toxins, and at the same time get rid of the tannins that render foods like acorns unpalatable. Nonetheless, apply the Universal Edibility Test (which we'll get to below) before chowing down.
6. Watch what animals eat. This is another thing the army manual thinks is a bad idea, since humans and animals have different vulnerabilities. No doubt, but come on. If an animal eats something and drops dead, I submit that tells you something. More seriously, if an animal eats something without apparent harm, I'd say it warrants further study using the UET.
7. Avoid white or yellow berries, as well as plants with beans, seeds, or milky white

sap. Castor bean seeds, for example, contain the deadly toxin ricin; a couple can be fatal. Purple or black berries are worth a try. Red fruit is iffy. Some are fine; many others (yew, holly, woody nightshade) not. Take no chances. UET 'em all.

8. Avoid plants that look like parsley or carrots—could be hemlock. Also, remember: "leaves of three, let them be"—groups of three leaves being the sign of poison ivy, sumac, and oak.

That gets us past the first cut. Now we run the Universal Edibility Test on what's left. I have a hard time believing you're going to remember 13 steps, and anyone together enough to bring the manual listing them would surely also stash a copy of *World's Edible Plants*. So here's a simplified version:

- Find something abundant. No sense wasting time on a plant that could turn out to be both poisonous and scarce.
  - Pick out one part of the plant to test—for example, just the leaves and not the roots. One may be poisonous while the other isn't. Which is more likely? No idea. That's why you're doing the test.
  - Fast for eight hours, to give anything you ate earlier time to act up.
  - While waiting, hold the plant against your wrist or inside elbow for 15 minutes to see if it irritates your skin.
  - Touch a small amount to your lips for three minutes.
  - Touch it to your tongue for 15 minutes.
  - Chew it but don't swallow for 15 minutes.
  - Swallow. If you don't get sick after eight hours, try a quarter cup of the plant and repeat the above.
- Still breathing? Good sign. Coughing blood? That's bad. Maybe next time you'll memorize those edible plants.

—CECIL ADAMS

*Comments, questions? Take it up with Cecil on the Straight Dope Message Board, [straightdope.com](http://straightdope.com), or write him at the Chicago Reader, 11 E. Illinois, Chicago 60611. And now you can subscribe to the Straight Dope podcast—search for "straight dope" in the iTunes Store.*

## ASTROLOGY FORECAST FOR FEBRUARY 2010

**FOR EVERYONE**—Shelter from the storm. February offers a brief but very helpful lull in the action, a protected space where we can all catch our breath. It will give us a chance to adjust to all the big changes that just went down and make plans for the future. There is a lot of luck and inspiration going around. Excitement will be in the air. An awareness of challenges ahead will mix with a strong sense of emerging opportunities. There is one big catch. We have to be doing something new. We need to toss out old ideas, and forget old ways of getting things done. And we especially have to be straight with ourselves and each other. No tricky stuff right now.

♈ **ARIES**—Respite. You have some challenging issues to tackle. However, February offers a short break in the action. You can safely pause to regroup. A supportive, healing force is at work deep in your psyche. Profound and helpful insights will arise. You will see evidence of a guiding, invisible hand. The immediate need is to find ways to help and heal others in need without overextending yourself, or destabilizing your own situation. The planets become increasingly supportive as 2010 progresses. You will soon become an agent of change wherever you go.

♉ **TAURUS**—Maturity. There will be a welcome lull in the pace of events. You'll have time to think and make much needed adjustments and to plan your next move. However, you'll see gaps between what you feel is necessary and what others seem willing to do. You need to push your limits in order to convince others to push their limits so everybody can make ends meet. Getting people to go that extra mile is more important than you realize. Your words and example are more persuasive than you realize, too.

♊ **GEMINI**—Inconvenient truths. Many will only see how easy this month seems and go back to business as usual. You, however, are aware of the continuing urgency of the situation and the challenges that must soon be met. But you can't go it alone. You need the earnest cooperation of others. You also need to work hard to keep the confidence of superiors. Your intuition is running on high. Your ability to inspire is enhanced. These are your most important assets in the battle against complacency. Budgets could continue to tighten.

♋ **CANCER**—Conflicting signals. February is a safe time to alter financial priorities in line with changing conditions. Some risk factors are definitely diminishing. There is a promise of greater stability down the road. But it is clear that lifestyle adjustments will be needed to cope with the situation and to take advantage of emerging opportunities. Intuitive insights and inspiration could be eerily accurate, and helpful. Integrate healing and self-nurturing activities more completely into your life. Don't allow a clever and manipulative higher up to cause trouble in financial or work areas.

♌ **LEO**—Swept away. Many are trying (some desperately) to patch together a workable lifestyle after recent upsets. You have the magic touch. People are naturally struck with helpful insights when they are around you. They suddenly understand what they must do next. As an added bonus, these people can help you get your personal stuff together. A supportive, protective influence will affect financial and health issues for the better part of this year. Relationships will flourish in ways you wouldn't have predicted and can't control, but which you will thoroughly enjoy.

♍ **VIRGO**—Overcome self-doubt. Success depends increasingly on partners and professional associates. However, you are not sure which partners you prefer, or which associates would prefer you as a partner or accept an overture from you. The answer might be to turn the tables. Express your ideas and your ideals and see who supports them. You need to steel yourself against the risks and uncertainties of speaking out, too. An unruly influence is transitioning into financial and wellness areas for a lengthy stay. Be ready to avoid potential problems in these areas.

♎ **LIBRA**—Fix the small stuff. Impatience for a more comfortable lifestyle could make you overextend at a time when energy is low. Big changes are not possible now. Tend to details. Refine your personal goals. Resolve energy-draining issues at home or at work. Shed responsibilities that are not really yours. Avoid those who won't carry their own weight. Working on such minor issues will bring dramatic insight and surprising improvements. A disruptive influence will soon stop affecting your work and family affairs. This will help you as you strive for a better work/life balance.

♏ **SCORPIO**—Conditional acceptance. Minor flirtations, casual social encounters and chance meetings can now seem surprisingly complicated and highly charged. They can stir deeper emotions than you would have expected. As alluring as such feelings can be, such meetings could also stir feelings of caution. You are increasingly aware that your present lifestyle is enjoyable and rewarding. You are also successfully working through some important, subtle and delicate issues. Those who don't understand your lifestyle could prove disruptive if you do not lay the groundwork for new relationships properly. Boundaries are good.

♐ **SAGITTARIUS**—Charisma. Inspiration and eloquence are running high. Others will notice. Don't be surprised if you receive formal recognition for your achievements. But you also have some serious matters on your mind. You feel inclined to use your persuasive talents to help others in your life who are struggling with change - to encourage and guide others through these difficult days. Idealism aside, learning to work constructively with the powerful forces changing everyone's life could enhance career prospects. Budgets might tighten temporarily, but opportunities for innovation and expansion will soon increase.

♑ **CAPRICORN**—Standoff. Much of your life is moving along nicely. But in areas where your life intersects with the community the issues are growing complicated. Issues seem to multiply as you try to solve them. Still, your instincts are especially good now and your inclinations are in harmony with the times. You might have to settle for delays and standoffs in some cases. Despite the obstacles, you will achieve much by reaching out into the community, for yourself and the community. Don't be manipulated into spending money you don't want to.

♒ **AQUARIUS**—Overstimulation. A lot of the energy that is helping people cope in these difficult times is coming from Aquarius's part of the Zodiac. These energies are driving major social and political trends. Your own mind is brimming over with ideas. You do have many powerful allies helping you get the message out. Still, this amounts to a big drain on your personal resources. All things considered, Aquarians could do with extra quality downtime these days. A supportive and protective influence has begun helping you expand your income.

♓ **PISCES**—The whole nine yards. Everything's on the table - life, love, friendship, career, happiness. You have a darn good chance to make a clean sweep. You'll need to get a lot of different and difficult things right for a long time to cash in. But the odds are strongly in favor of success. A challenging and disruptive influence is moving out of your sign after a long stay. A supportive and protective influence is now solidly in your corner, kicking off a lengthy, profitable cycle of personal growth and development.



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